

The Gospel According to ST. MARK

INTRODUCTION

1. Title. The earliest extant manuscripts bear the simple title “According to Mark.” Later, as the term “gospel” came to be applied to the story of Jesus’ life and ministry, it was incorporated into the title of this book. The title found in the KJV, “The Gospel According to St. Mark,” appears only in late manuscripts.

2. Authorship. The unanimous and consistent testimony of Christian tradition points to John Mark as the author of the Gospel that bears his name. The name Mark is from the Latin *Marcus*, and is the surname of the writer (Acts 12:12, 25). His first name was John (see ch. 13:5, 13). His mother’s name was Mary (ch. 12:12). He was a cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10), who at one time had been a resident of the island of Cyprus (Acts 4:36). Mark’s home in Jerusalem seems to have been the house in which was the “upper room” (see on Matt. 26:18), where, for a time at least, some of the apostles lived after the resurrection and the ascension (John 20:19; Acts 1:13), and where members of the early church in Jerusalem assembled (Acts 12:12). It was John Mark who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on the first part of their first missionary journey (ch. 13:5, 13). On a later journey, Mark accompanied Barnabas to the island of Cyprus (ch. 15:36–39). Later he seems to have worked under the direction of Peter and Paul (1 Peter 5:13; Col. 4:10 2 Tim. 4:11). The fact that the Gospel carries the name of so inconspicuous a man as Mark is indirect evidence of its genuineness and of his authorship. Had the book been a forgery, the name of a more well-known person who had been associated personally with Jesus, such as the apostle Peter, would no doubt have been attached to it. There is no valid reason to doubt either the authenticity of the book or that Mark was its author. Papias, bishop of the city of Hierapolis, about 10 mi. (16 km.) from Collossae and Laodicea in Asia Minor, is the first known writer who speaks of Mark as the author of this Gospel. In his *Interpretations*, as quoted in Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* iii. 39. 15; Loeb ed., vol. 1, p. 297), he states:

““And the Presbyter [most probably the presbyter John] used to say this, “Mark became Peter’s interpreter and wrote accurately all that he remembered, not, indeed, in order, of the things said or done by the Lord. For he had not heard the Lord, nor had he followed him, but later on, as I said, followed Peter, who used to give teaching as necessity demanded but not making, as it were, an arrangement of the Lord’s oracles, so that Mark did nothing wrong in thus writing down single points as he remembered them. For to one thing he gave attention, to leave out nothing of what he had heard and to make no false statements in them.”””

This statement is in harmony with Peter’s reference to Mark as “my son” (1 Peter 5:13).

Papias’ report is taken generally to imply that Mark served as a translator for the apostle Peter when he addressed audiences in whose language he was not fluent, apparently on journeys in lands where Aramaic, Peter’s native tongue, was not spoken. However, see AA 40. Presumably, Mark translated Peter’s gospel account so often that he became familiar with it and thus was prepared to write the gospel narrative under inspiration of the Holy spirit. Most scholars agree that Mark’s record is the earliest of the four Gospels.

The Church Fathers are not in agreement as to whether Mark wrote before or after Peter's death (c. A.D. 64–66). Irenaeus of Lyons (c. A.D. 185) declares that Mark's Gospel was written after Peter died (*Against Heresies* iii. 1. 1). Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 190), on the other hand, places the writing of Mark during the lifetime of Peter (Eusebius, *op. cit.*, vi. 14. 5–7; Loeb ed., vol. 2, pp. 47, 49). The latter view appears to agree more closely with available information. But whichever was the case, the writing of this Gospel is doubtless to be placed between the years A.D. 55 and 70.

Many statements in the Gospel of Mark make evident that it was written for non-Jewish readers. Such a words as *kenturiōn* (Latin *centurio*, “centurion”; ch. 15:39) and *spekoulator* (Latin *speculator*, “executioner”; ch. 6:27) suggest that while written in Greek, the language of culture, it was intended for Romans. Mark might have used the common Greek words for these officers, rather than the Latin, but he seems repeatedly to have chosen Latin words in Greek transliteration, presumably because they would be more familiar to his readers. He explains Palestinian coinage (ch. 12:42), obviously because his intended readers were not familiar with it. Similarly, he explains the Jewish Passover (ch. 14:12) and customs of the Pharisees (ch. 7:3, 4). He translates various Aramaic words and expressions (chs. 5:41; 7:34; 15:34). None of this would have been necessary for a Palestinian reading audience. At the same time the writer was obviously a Jew who knew Aramaic and was familiar with the Old Testament, which, however, he quotes from the LXX translation.

3. Historical Setting. For a brief outline of the historical background of the life and mission of Jesus see p. 272. For a more complete discussion see pp. 41-67.

4. Theme. Mark is the shortest of the Gospels, yet in some respects it is the most vigorous and powerful of them all. Though only two thirds the length of Matthew, it contains a record of most of the incidents related in its longer counterpart. Its style is terse, vigorous, incisive, vivid, picturesque, and often provides significant details not mentioned by any of the other evangelists.

Mark emphasizes Jesus as a Man of action, whereas Matthew presents Him as a Teacher. Thus Mark records almost all the miracles that are reported by both the other synoptic writers. A characteristic word of Mark's is *eutheōs* (or *euthus*), “straightway,” or “immediately,” which he uses more often than all the other gospel writers together. See on ch. 1:10.

Mark relates the life of Christ largely in chronological order, rather than topically as Matthew does. His emphasis on miracles makes apparent his purpose to highlight the mighty power of God as evidenced by the many “signs” and “wonders” performed by Jesus. This is Mark's primary testimony to the divinity of Jesus, as that of Matthew is the fact that He fulfilled the predictions of the prophets of old. Matthew proves Jesus the Messiah on the basis that He is the One to whom the prophets bore witness. Mark proves Him the Messiah by the witness of His divine power, which, presumably, would be more convincing to his intended readers—Christians of a Gentile, perhaps Roman, background. See pp. 191, 272-274.

5. Outline. In view of the fact that a full, chronological outline of the Gospel of Mark appears on pp. 196–201, the outline presented here covers only the major phases of the life and ministry of Jesus:

- I. Preparation for Ministry, Autumn, A.D. 27, 1:1–13.

- II. Galilean Ministry, Passover to Passover, A.D. 29–30, 1:14 to 7:23.
 - A. Early Galilean ministry, 1:14–34.
 - B. The first missionary journey, 1:35–45.
 - C. Ministry in and about Capernaum, 2:1 to 3:19.
 - D. The second missionary journey, 3:20 to 5:43.
 - E. The third missionary journey, 6:1 to 7:23.
- III. Retirement From Public Ministry, Spring to Autumn, A.D. 30, 7:24 to 9:50.
 - A. Ministry in regions bordering on Galilee, 7:24 to 8:10.
 - B. Looking forward to the cross, 8:11 to 9:50.
- IV. Peraean Ministry, Autumn to Spring, A.D. 30–31, 10:1–52.
- V. Closing Ministry at Jerusalem, Passover, A.D. 31, 11:1 to 15:47.
 - A. Conflict with scribes and Pharisees, 11:1 to 12:44.
 - B. Jesus’ prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem and of His second coming, 13:1–37.
 - C. The arrest and trial of Jesus, 14:1 to 15:20.
 - D. The crucifixion and burial of Jesus, 15:21–47.
- VI. The Resurrection; Postresurrection Appearances, 16:1–20.

CHAPTER 1

1 *The office of John the Baptist. 9 Jesus is baptized, 12 tempted, 14 he preacheth: 16 calleth Peter, Andrew, James and John: 23 healeth one that had a devil, 29 Peter’s mother in law, 32 many diseased persons, 40 and cleanseth the leper.*

1. The beginning. [*Ministry of John the Baptist, Mark 1:1–8=Matt. 3:1–12=Luke 3:1–18.* Major comment: Matthew and Luke.] Unlike Matthew and Luke, who narrate incidents from the early life of Jesus, Mark begins his gospel record with the moment at which Jesus began His public ministry. The descent to the Holy Spirit and John’s announcement of Jesus as the Messiah, unmistakably mark His baptism as the commencement of His public ministry. According to Mark, then, the gospel, the “good news” about Jesus Christ, begins with the fulfillment of OT prophecy at His baptism (vs. 2–11).

Gospel. Gr. *euaggelion*, “good news.” The word “gospel” originally referred to the “good news” that the Messiah had indeed come to earth, as foretold by the prophets. Eventually the term was applied to the narrative of the life of Jesus, and later, to the various documents, or Gospels, in which the record is preserved. Here, it is used probably in its earliest sense.

Jesus Christ. See on Matt. 1:1.

Son of God. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between retaining and omitting these words. Concerning Jesus as the “Son of God” see on Luke 1:35.

2. As it is written. In setting forth Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, Mark points to the confirming evidence of an exact fulfillment of OT prophecy—as did Jesus Himself (Luke 24:25, 27, 44) and, in fact, as did NT writers in general. The witness of fulfilled prophecy is presented in the Bible as one of the strongest proofs of the truth of the Christian faith (see Isa. 41:21–23; 44:7; 46:9, 10; see DA 799). Mark’s quotations (Mark 1:2, 3) are taken from Mal. 3:1 and Isa. 40:3, and follow the LXX more closely than the Hebrew.

The prophets. See on Matt. 3:3. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this reading and “Isaiah the prophet.” The quotation is from Malachi and Isaiah. Compare

Matthew's general reference to the fulfillment of that "which was spoken by the prophets" (see on Matt. 2:23).

Messenger. John the Baptist was the messenger foretold by Isaiah and Malachi; his message consisted in the announcement that the Messiah, the "messenger of the covenant" (Mal. 3:1), had appeared.

Before thy face. See on Matt. 3:3. Similarly, Jesus later sent forth the Seventy to go "before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come" (Luke 10:1).

3. The voice. See on Matt. 3:3; cf. John 1:23.

4. Repentance. See on Matt. 3:2. John's baptism was a "baptism of repentance" because it was characterized by repentance. The act of baptism did not guarantee either repentance or forgiveness. But baptism was not genuine unless marked by these experiences.

Remission. Or, "forgiveness." See on Matt. 3:6.

5. In the river of Jordan. A detail furnished only by Mark.

7. Preached. John's announcement of the Messiah was a characteristic and customary part of his preaching.

Latchet. The "shoes" were in reality sandals that protected only the soles of the feet (see on Matt. 3:11). The "latchet," or "thong," held the sandal to the foot.

Stoop down. An expression supplied only by Mark, by way of emphasizing the menial nature of the act. See on Matt. 3:11.

9. In those days. [*The Baptism, Mark 1:9–11=Matt. 3:13–17=Luke 3:21–23^a*. Major comment: Matthew.] That is, in the days of John's ministry.

In Jordan. See on v. 5. Mark refers to the fact that the baptizing was done "in the river of Jordan," and that after baptism the candidates came "up out of the water" (v. 10). This is strong evidence that John's baptism was by immersion.

10. Straightway. Gr. *ehtheōs*, "immediately," "forthwith," a favorite word with Mark. If, as is commonly thought, Mark wrote his Gospel with the assistance of Peter (see p. 564), this characteristic may reflect the vigorous, graphic, and sparkling manner of Peter's preaching.

Opened. Gr. *schizō*, which is a stronger term than that used by the other gospel writers, equivalent to "rend asunder."

12. The spirit driveth. [*The Temptation, Mark 1:12, 13=Matt. 4:1–11=Luke 4:1–13*. Major comment: Matthew.]

13. With the wild beasts. Such as the Palestinian wolf, boar, hyena, jackal, and leopard. Wild beasts are probably mentioned by way of making vivid the isolation, loneliness, and danger of the wilderness.

14. Now after. [*Opening of the Galilean Ministry, Mark 1:14, 15=Matt. 4:12=Luke 4:14, 15*. Major comment: Matthew.] See Additional Note on Luke 4; The Duration of Christ's Ministry, and the Opening of the Galilean Ministry.

15. Time. Gr. *kairos*. This word refers to a particularly auspicious time (see Matt. 13:30; 16:3; 21:34; 26:18; Luke 19:44; John 7:6; Rom. 5:6; Eph. 1:10)—in this case to the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom. The term seems to have been used frequently with particular reference to the coming of the Messiah and the end of the world (see Mark 13:33; Luke 21:8; Eph. 1:10; Rev. 1:3). Jesus' announcement, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand," was the same as John's

message (see Matt. 3:2). The people understood it as a declaration that the Messianic kingdom was about to be set up. In the popular mind, as indeed in John's, this involved the establishment of an earthly kingdom for the Jews and subsequent triumph over all their enemies (see DA 103). Throughout Jesus' ministry this misunderstanding continued, and was not finally corrected in the minds of His disciples until after the resurrection (see Luke 24:13–32; Acts 1:6, 7), even though through His parables Jesus had repeatedly taught that the kingdom He had come to establish was, to begin with, a spiritual kingdom (see on Matt. 4:17; Matt. 5:3; cf. ch. 13:1–52).

Jesus' announcement, "The time is fulfilled," referred to the prophecy of the 70 weeks in Dan. 9:24–27, near the end of which "Messiah the Prince" was to "confirm the covenant with many" and "be cut off" (see DA 233; GC 327). In the days of Christ, some, at least, knew that this time period of Daniel was nearly at an end (DA 31, 33, 34). "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son" into the world (Gal. 4:4). When Jesus began His ministry, the time was ripe for the establishment of His kingdom (see DA 32, 36, 37).

16. As he walked. [*The Call by the Sea, Mark 1:16–20=Matt. 4:18–22=Luke 5:1–11.* Major comment: Luke.] Literally, "as He was passing by."

Simon. See on ch. 3:16. Mark uses the name Simon in ch. 3:16, where he records the fact that Jesus gave Simon the name Peter, and then, with one exception (ch. 14:37), he employs the latter name.

17. Make you to become. To transform ordinary fishermen into fishers of men would involve a long, slow process of training. Peter, Andrew, James, and John were expert fishermen, but now they must acquire new skills.

20. Hired servants. Zebedee was not left to work alone. Accepting the call to become one of Jesus' disciples did not mean that the four men thereby neglected their filial obligations. The presence of "hired servants" implies a rather extensive and successful business. Mark alone records this interesting detail of the narrative.

21. They went. [*The Demoniac in the Synagogue, Mark 1:21–28=Luke 4:31b–37.* Major comment: Mark. See Early Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] Literally, "they go." Mark frequently uses the present tense to add a touch of graphic reality to his narrative. "They" includes Jesus and the four disciples whom He had now called.

Capernaum. See on Luke 4:31.

On the sabbath. See on Luke 4:16, 31. It is not to be inferred from Mark's rapidly moving narrative that the four disciples had been fishing on the Sabbath day. "Straightway" here simply denotes the first Sabbath following the incident narrated in Mark 1:16–20.

The synagogue. For a description of the ancient synagogue and its services see pp. 56, 57.

22. Astonished. See on Matt. 4:13.

His doctrine. That is, "His teaching."

Authority. This characteristic set the teaching of Christ in strong contrast with that of the scribes, and was commented on again and again by those who heard Him (see Matt. 7:29; Mark 1:27; etc.). Instead of dwelling upon what men of past ages had thought and written, and appealing to this as authority, He spoke forth as having authority in Himself directly from the Father. The scribes were wont to say that a certain rabbi had said thus

and so, whereas Jesus declared, “I say unto you” (Matt. 5:21, 22). It is true today as it was then that only the preaching of spiritual certainties can bring healing to the sin-sick souls of men.

Scribes. The official teachers of the law and of tradition. Most of them were Pharisees. These professional expositors of the oral and written law were in constant controversy with Jesus (see Matt. 22:34–46; 23:13, 14). They often displayed a hair-splitting legalism that sought to determine the propriety of even the most minute acts of life. They frequently explained the Scriptures in such a way as to cast doubt upon their meaning rather than to make it clear, and busied themselves with the traditions of the fathers, which they considered equal or superior to the Scriptures, making void the law of God (Mark 7:9, 13). Thus they laid upon men “burdens grievous to be borne,” but would not even “touch” one of the burdens with their own fingers (Luke 11:46). See p. 55; see on Matt. 2:4.

23. An unclean spirit. Gr. *pneuma akatharton*. In the Gospels this expression is used synonymously with *daimonion* (cf. Matt. 10:1 with Luke 9:1), a word that indicates a spirit superior to men, and which in the NT always applies to an evil spirit, a demon or devil. The Gospels record six specific instances of demon possession: (1) The man in the synagogue at Capernaum (see on Mark 1:12–28), (2) an unidentified man who was dumb as well as possessed (see on Matt. 9:32–34), (3) the two demoniacs of Gadara (see on Mark 5:1–20), (4) the daughter of a Syrophenician woman (see on Matt. 15:21–28), (5) the son of an unidentified man (see on Mark 9:14–29), and (6) Mary (Mark 16:9). In addition to these specific cases, the Gospels often mention that Jesus and His disciples healed those afflicted with evil spirits. For a discussion of demon possession in NT times, see Additional Note at end of chapter.

He cried out. This occurred at the point where Christ was speaking of His mission to set free those who were slaves of sin and of Satan (see MH 91; cf. on Luke 4:18). In this experience Christ was brought once more face to face with the enemy whom He had defeated in the wilderness of temptation (see DA 256). The audience was listening intently to the message Christ bore, and Satan designed in this way to divert the attention of the people from the truth that was finding fertile ground in at least some of their hearts.

24. What have we to do with thee? Literally, “What to us and to you?” This characteristic Hebrew idiom (see Judges 11:12; 2 Sam. 16:10) appears in the LXX virtually in the same form as here. It means, “What do we have in common?” The Gadarene demoniacs later used the same words (see Matt. 8:29; see on John 2:4). From Mark 1:23, 25, 26, it appears that only one evil spirit was in possession of the man. The plural pronouns in the present verse probably refer to all demons in general, with which class of beings this particular evil spirit identified himself.

Thou Jesus. Demons in possession of human beings commonly confessed that Jesus was the Son of God (see ch. 3:11, 12; 5:7). According to James, “the devils also believe, and tremble” (see James 2:19), and their knowledge of the divine will and purpose must far exceed that of man.

Destroy us. This demon evidently anticipated with terror the great judgment day of God (see Eze. 28:16–19; Matt. 8:29). He apparently knew of the “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41), and was apprehensive that Christ was about to execute divine judgment upon him (see 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

Holy One of God. The evil spirit hailed Jesus as One who was in particularly close relationship to God. At other times demons addressed Him as the “Son of God” (Matt. 8:29; Luke 8:28), the very title that led the Jewish leaders to desire His death (John 5:17, 18) and eventually to condemn Him (see Matt. 26:63–68; cf. John 10:30–36).

25. Rebuked. Gr. *epitimaō*, literally, “to lay a value on,” in the NT, “to tax with fault,” “to chide,” “to admonish,” “to censure.” Jesus “censured” the evil spirit without, however, bringing a “railing accusation” against him (see Jude 9). The rebuke appears to have been administered because the spirit addressed Him as the Messiah. Jesus well knew that an open claim to the Messiahship at this time would only prejudice many minds against Him. Furthermore, the turbulent political situation in Palestine produced many false messiahs, who proposed to lead their countrymen in revolt against Rome (see Acts 5:36, 37; cf. DA 30, 733), and Jesus sought to avoid being considered a political messiah in the popular sense. This would have blinded the people to the true nature of His mission and have offered the authorities a pretext for silencing His labors.

A further reason why Jesus avoided claiming to be the Messiah was that He desired that men should recognize Him as such through personal experience—by observing His perfect life, by listening to His words of truth, by witnessing His mighty works, and by recognizing in all of this the fulfillment of OT prophecy. It was evidently with this thought in mind that He answered the disciples of John the Baptist as He did (Matt. 11:2–6).

Hold thy peace. Literally, “be muzzled.”

26. Torn. Gr. *sparassō*, a term used by ancient medical writers of the convulsive action of the stomach in retching. Here it might be translated “attacked,” or “convulsed,” and may indicate that the man was thrown upon the ground. The same word is used repeatedly of the convulsive fits suffered by those possessed of demons (Mark 9:20, 26; Luke 9:39). The attack may have been an attempt on the part of the demon to kill the unfortunate victim. This display provided a striking contrast between demon possession and the normal state of self-possession that followed.

27. With authority. Not only did Jesus preach with authority (Matt. 7:29; Mark 1:22); He acted with authority. Jewish exorcists used incantations, charms, and other superstitious procedures in their endeavor to cast out evil spirits. Jesus spoke a single word, and the demons left immediately. Spirits, as well as men, acknowledged the authority of the Son of God.

The healing of the nobleman’s son had stirred the city of Capernaum (see on John 4:53). Now its people witnessed an even greater manifestation of the power of God.

28. Fame. Gr. *akoē*, “that which is heard.” This word has much the same sense as the English “report,” “news.” Jesus quickly became a well-known person in Galilee (see also Luke 4:14, 15, 37; Luke 5:15, 17).

29. Forthwith. [*Peter’s Mother-in-law; The Sick Healed at Even, Mark 1:29–34=Matt. 8:14–17=Luke 4:38–41.* Major comment: Mark. See the Early Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] Gr. *eutheōs*; see on v. 10.

The house of Simon. During the Galilean ministry Jesus repeatedly stayed in the house of Simon Peter (cf. DA 259, 267). His counsel to the Twelve, to remain at one house during their stay in a town (Mark 6:10), doubtless was consistent with His own practice.

30. Simon's wife's mother. Peter is the only one of the Twelve specifically mentioned as being married, though in view of the fact that most Jews were married, it has been thought that probably most, if not all, of the other disciples also had wives.

This is the first miracle recorded by all three synoptic writers. Mark's account provides several details that are lacking in the others.

Sick of a fever. Gr. *puressō*, from the word *pur*, meaning "fire." Our English word "fever" is derived from a related word. Luke, a physician, diagnosed this affliction as a "great fever" (see on Luke 4:38). The presence of marshland not far from Capernaum, whose climate was subtropical, suggests that it may have been malaria.

Anon. Gr. *eutheōs* (see on v. 10). Jesus' disciples demonstrated their confidence in Him by turning to Him immediately in time of physical distress.

31. Took her by the hand. This act was a personal touch of loving sympathy commonly employed by Jesus (see Matt. 9:25; Mark 5:41; 8:23; 9:27). Contact with divine power, through faith, made this woman whole. The soul that is sick with sin also needs to feel the touch of a hand that is warm with sympathy.

Immediately. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of the word here. However, that Peter's mother did arise at once is stated in Luke 4:39, and is indicated by the fact that all three accounts imply that she was able to minister to the household before sunset. A long fever usually leaves its victim weak, and a period of time is necessary before the vital powers of the body are restored to their normal strength, but this woman's cure appears to have been instantaneous.

32. When the sun did set. Apparently realizing that the term "even" was not sufficiently definite among the Jews to locate the point of time he had in mind, Mark adds this further explanatory comment. Some commentators have considered this added expression a tautology, but in view of the relative indefiniteness of the term translated "even," this is highly improbable.

Mark's reason for being precise as to the time when the sick of the city were brought to the door of Peter's home lay probably in the fact that rabbinical law prohibited all but emergency attention to the sick on the Sabbath (see on John 5:10; 7:23; 9:14). Also, acts of healing, except in cases of dire emergency, where life itself was in danger, were considered work, and therefore inappropriate for the Sabbath day (see on Luke 13:10–17).

The fact that all three synoptic writers describe this incident with comparative thoroughness implies that it was a memorable occasion for all the disciples. The Twelve had been bitterly disappointed at the reception thus far accorded the ministry of Jesus, particularly in Judea and at Nazareth. This demonstration of public confidence in Him must have greatly strengthened their own faith.

33. All the city. A vivid detail mentioned only by Mark. This does not necessarily mean that every person living in Capernaum came to Peter's home, rather it is a hyperbolic description of the throngs of people who did come.

34. Devils. Gr. *daimonion* (see on v. 23; see Additional Note at end of chapter).

Suffered not. Or, "would not permit." For the reason see on v. 25.

35. In the morning. [*First Galilean Tour, Mark 1:35–39=Matt. 4:23–25=Luke 4:42–44.* Major comment: Mark. See Early Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord.] Gr. *prōi*, "early in the day." This term was commonly used in reference to the last watch of

the night, from about 3:00 to 6:00 A.M.(see Mark 16:2, 9; John 20:1). It being early summer, the sun would rise about 5 o'clock and the first light of dawn would be visible about 3:30, at the latitude of Capernaum. See p. 50.

A great while before day. The Greek indicates that it was deep in the night, which in this case would be the early part of the morning watch. Jesus must have had but little sleep, for it was far into the night before the throngs of sick brought to the door of Peter's home had dispersed (see DA 259).

A solitary place. Jesus sought to be alone, where the throngs of people could not find Him (cf. DA 363).

Prayed. See on ch. 3:13. One of the outstanding and significant characteristics of Christ was that He prayed, often and effectively. Frequently during His earthly life Jesus pointed out that "the Son can do nothing of himself" (John 5:19; cf. v. 30). The marvelous works He did were accomplished by the Father's power (see DA 143). The words He spoke were given Him by the Father (John 8:28). Before Jesus came to this earth He knew every detail of the plan for His life, "but as He walked among men, He was guided, step by step, by the Father's will" (DA 147; see on Luke 2:49). The plan for His life was unfolded to Him day by day (see DA 208).

36. *Simon.* Peter is mentioned by name either because he was a recognized leader of the group or because, as is commonly thought, Mark records the narrative as told to him by Peter (see p. 563).

With him. Probably including, at least, Peter's brother Andrew, and James and John, the four men thus far officially called to be disciples. They are named as being at Peter's home the day before (v. 29).

Followed. Gr. *katadiōkō*, "to pursue," "to search for." This was no merely casual attempt to find Jesus. His disciples doubtless were eager to bring their miracle-working Master back to the gathering crowds, that He might increase His fame even further. They seem to have felt that Jesus was losing precious opportunities to win followers and to increase the popularity of His cause. But their motives were out of accord with the purpose for which the miracles had been performed. See p. 209; see on v. 38.

37. *All men.* That is, the people of Capernaum (see on v. 33).

38. *Let us go.* Jesus proposed to retreat before the sudden wave of popularity that was about to submerge the true objectives of His ministry. More harm than good would result from acceding to the unenlightened clamor of the people, and He refused to be ensnared. Jesus considered His miracles a means to the end of the leading men to an awareness of their need for the healing of the soul, but the multitudes saw no further than the miracles themselves. Short of sight, they mistook the means for the end, but the means without the end would tend only to carry them further than ever from the kingdom Christ had come to proclaim. Unless these false conceptions of His work could be dispelled, all Christ's endeavors would be in vain. See on v. 36.

Therefore came I forth. Or, "that is why I came out" (RSV). Here, it would seem that Jesus refers to His coming forth from the city of Capernaum "into a solitary place" (v. 35), rather than to His coming down from heaven to earth. However, the parallel passage in Luke (ch. 4:43) implies that Jesus here spoke of His mission to earth. On other occasions He referred specifically to His coming from the Father, in relation to His mission as a whole (see John 10:10; John 18:37; Luke 19:10).

39. He preached. Thus opens Mark's account of the first missionary tour of Galilee, begun, probably, in the early summer of A.D. 29 (see MB 2, 3; see Additional Note on Luke 4). In his writings Josephus names upward of 200 towns and villages in Galilee, and these afforded ample opportunity for an extensive and protracted campaign away from the larger cities clustered along the western shore of the Lake of Galilee. As with the early Judean ministry, concerning which the synoptic writers say little if anything, it is probable that the first missionary tour was more extensive and continued over a longer period of time than the brief attention given it would tend to indicate (see on Mark 2:1). Mark records only one specific incident on the first tour (ch. 1:40–45), but his summary of the results of the tour (v. 45) points to a successful period of ministry covering several weeks, and perhaps as much as two or three months.

In their synagogues. See pp. 56, 57. As a popular visiting rabbi Jesus would be asked to participate in the services and to speak, as at Nazareth (Luke 4:16–27) and at Capernaum (Mark 1:21, 22).

Throughout all Galilee. Matthew (ch. 4:23–25) speaks more at length of the extent and influence of the first missionary tour.

Altogether Jesus conducted three missionary tours in Galilee between the Passover of A.D. and that of A.D. 30, the period of the Galilean ministry (see The Ministry of Our Lord). On the first tour it is uncertain whether Jesus had as companions more than the four disciples whom He had recently called by the Lake of Galilee (see Mark 1:16–20). They are the only ones specifically named as being with Jesus the day before His departure from Capernaum (v. 29). Others may have begun to follow Him during the course of the first tour, as the formal appointment of the Twelve took place before the beginning of the second tour (ch. 3:13–19).

On this first tour Christ proclaimed the imminent establishment of the “kingdom of God” (Luke 4:43), which was basic to all of His later teaching.

40. A leper. [*First Healing of Leprosy, Mark 1:40–45=Matt. 8:24=Luke 5:12–16.* Major comment: Mark. See Early Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] Opinions differ as to whether this miracle occurred after the Sermon on the Mount, as in Matthew, or during the course of the first tour of Galilee, as here. Mark generally observes what seems to be a more nearly chronological order of events, whereas Matthew often deviates from a time order to achieve a topical arrangement. Therefore the order given in Mark appears preferable. Accordingly, this healing is perhaps the only specific incident recorded in connection with the first journey Jesus made through Galilee. See pp. 191, 192, 274.

This miracle is recorded in Matt. 8:2–4 and Luke 5:12–16, but Mark's account is more detailed. Later Jesus healed other leprosy victims (Matt. 26:6; Luke 7:22; 17:12–14; cf. DA 557) and sent out His disciples to do the same (Matt. 10:8).

As to the nature of “leprosy” in ancient times, see the word in the *SDA Bible Dictionary*. On its diagnosis and the laws of segregation and ritual purification, see Lev. 13 and 14.

The Jews popularly regarded leprosy as a divine judgment on sin (to which also they attributed being born blind; see John 9:2). They had imbibed an old pagan idea (see an Old Babylonian omen text in *Archiv für Orientforschung* 18:62 naming certain symptoms, apparently of leprosy, as meaning abandonment by God and man). Hence they made no efforts toward alleviation or cure; indeed, they knew no remedy for true leprosy—only

isolation. (And even past the mid-20th century, quarantine continued as a standard procedure everywhere; since then new drugs have allowed outpatient treatment and made isolation unnecessary.

If thou wilt. Three great obstacles probably presented themselves to the mind of this afflicted man, any one of which might have been sufficient to make the prospect of healing seem remote, if not impossible. In the first place, as far as is known, there was no record of such a healing since Naaman's, some 800 years before. A second obstacle, even more formidable, was the popular belief that he was under the curse of God. Would Jesus be willing to heal him? The third obstacle presented a more practical problem. How could he get near enough to Jesus to present his requests? The ritual law strictly forbade him to approach or mingle with others, and wherever Jesus went the people thronged about Him. This effectively barred the suffering man from Jesus' immediate presence.

Make ... clean. Gr. *katharizō*, "to cleanse," rather than *therapeuō*, "to heal," "to cure." In both OT and NT times victims of leprosy were spoken of as "unclean," needing "cleansing," rather than "sick," needing "cure." This distinction in terminology reflects the *idea* of ritual cleansing.

41. Touched him. Jesus often touched the sick in healing (Matt. 8:15), but sometimes did not (John 4:49, 50). He knew that touching a leprosy man meant uncleanness; nevertheless, He did so boldly.

Be thou clean. Since no human being could then cure leprosy, the fact that Jesus did implied that He had divine power. This gave the people faith that He was able also to cleanse the soul from sin. Jesus had come to the earth for the specific purpose of cleansing sinners, whose spiritual illness was more deadly than leprosy.

42. Immediately. This in itself was an important part of the miracle. It all happened before the very eyes of the throng. The sufferer's flesh was restored, his muscles became firm, his nerves sensitive (see DA 263).

43. Straitly charged. Gr. *embrimaomai*, "to be deeply moved," "to admonish urgently." This word is translated "groaned" in John 11:33 and "murmured" in Mark 14:5, and always indicates strong emotion. The gospel writers use it of Christ on but two other occasions (see Matt. 9:30 and John 11:33, 38). Only in rare instances did Jesus assume a stern attitude (see Matt. 23:13-33; John 2:13-17; cf. DA 353). The reasons of Jesus' apparent severity here are made clear in Mark 1:45.

44. Say nothing. Several factors probably prompted Jesus to tell the healed man to say nothing about what had happened, and to send him "forthwith" (v. 43) to present himself to the priests. In the first place, prompt action was necessary in order that the man might reach the priests before they learned who had healed him. Only thus could he expect an impartial decision, for if the priests should learn that it was Jesus who had healed the man, they probably would refuse to certify his cleansing. His own interests made silence and prompt action a necessity.

Also, if the many leprosy victims in the region should hear of the power of Jesus to release them from disease, they doubtless would flock to Him and make more difficult His ministry for the people in general. Furthermore, Jesus required as prerequisite a sincere sense of need on the part of the afflicted one, and at least a measure of faith (see Mark 5:34; John 4:49, 50; cf. DA 264, 267, 268).

Another reason for silence was that He sought to avoid creating a reputation for Himself as a mere wonder-worker. The gospel record makes evident that He considered

miracles to be secondary; His first and great objective was the saving of men's souls. Christ ever called upon men to seek first the kingdom of heaven, in full confidence that their heavenly Father would add to them such material blessing as they might need (Matt. 6:33).

Various instances where Jesus, for these and other reasons, forbade the publicizing of accounts of the miracles He performed are to be found in Matt. 9:30; 12:16; Mark 5:43; 7:36; 8:26.

Show thyself. According to the Mosaic law the priests who served as public-health officers diagnosed leprosy and ordered segregation. Since, in the OT at least, other skin diseases were described by the term *leprosy*, the examiners must have been unable at times to screen out the curable types. Those who recovered from their disease could return home after reexamination, purification rites, and presumably certification (Lev. 14).

Such a certificate from the priest would amount to official recognition of this miraculous cure (see DA 265). The man himself would be a living witness to what had taken place. As it was, many priests were convinced by this and other evidences of the divinity of Christ (see DA 266). After the resurrection many of the priests professed their faith in Him (see Acts 6:7) and joined the infant church.

Jesus' telling the healed man to follow the injunctions of the law demonstrates that He was not opposed to the laws of Moses. He Himself was born "under the law" (Gal. 4:4; see on Matt. 23:2, 3). But He did express vigorous opposition to the traditions that the scribes had built around the Mosaic precepts, by which they made void both the letter and the spirit of what God had imparted to Moses (see Matt. 15:3; Mark 7:8, 9; cf. DA 395–398). By sending this man to the priests Christ doubtless purposed to demonstrate to them and to the people His own recognition of the laws He Himself had imparted to Moses long before. In this way He hoped to disprove the false charges made by the priests, the official guardians of the law. Thus those who were open-minded among them might see that the charge of disloyalty to the law of Moses was false, and might be led to acknowledge Him as the Messiah (see DA 265).

Offer for thy cleansing. See Vol. I, p. 707, and on Lev. 14.

For a testimony. That is, a testimony to the divine power Jesus manifested, to His sympathetic interest in the needs of mankind, to His respect for the laws of Moses, and for the Jewish leaders as the guardians and executors of the law, and above all, to His power to deliver men from sin and death.

Unto them. It is not entirely clear whether this is a reference to the priests or to the people as a whole, including the priests. However, the context seems to make it refer to the priests. It was to them that the things Moses commanded were to be offered "for a testimony." The people had seen the evidence acted out before their eyes; the priests had not. But the healed man's cooperation with the ritual law would testify of the things concerning which Christ desired them to be aware. Of course, the priestly decision would constitute a permanent legal testimony before all the people once it had been entered in the official record.

45. Publish it much. Or, "talk freely about it" (RSV). Not understanding how his failure to comply with the strict injunction to silence would hinder the work of Christ, and consoling himself with the thought that the modesty of Jesus was the only

consideration involved, the grateful man talked freely of the power of the One who had healed him.

Blaze abroad the matter. Or, “spread the news” (RSV).

No more. That is, no longer. This miracle, or rather its result, seems to have marked the close of Christ’s first missionary journey through the towns and villages of Galilee. He was compelled to cease His work for a time (see DA 265).

The city. Literally, “a city,” that is, any city or town.

In desert places. Or, “in the country” (RSV). No indication appears as to where Jesus’ place of retreat may have been. Christ probably remained near the more populous parts of the area, going perhaps into the hills a few miles west of the Lake of Galilee. Some days later He was once more in Capernaum ch. 2:1, at Peter’s home (see DA 267).

They came. The form of the Greek verb implies that the people kept on coming. Their imagination was on fire, but unfortunately their zeal was without knowledge, and they misunderstood Christ’s purpose in performing His miracles (see p. 209).

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 1

Those who deny the inspiration of Scripture and reject the idea of a literal devil and literal evil spirits attribute the phenomena of what the Bible calls demon possession, to natural causes, particularly to various physical and nervous disorders such as epilepsy and insanity. Others, accepting as true the gospel statements concerning demon possession, have not always taken into account the nature and relationship of the accompanying physical and nervous disorders. This note will seek to explain the problem as regards both satanic control of the lives of all the wicked in general and in the more restricted sense of demon possession with its accompanying bodily manifestations.

Control by the Holy Spirit.—Through the agency of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:22) Christ abides in the hearts of those who, by their own free choice, will to serve Him (2 Cor. 5:14; Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:27; etc.; cf. MB 142). As, with their cooperation, He works in them to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13), a power from on high takes possession, bringing the natural tendencies into harmony with divine principles (Rom. 8:29; Gal. 5:22, 23; 2 Thess. 2:14). Only those who thus yield control of their minds to God can, in the full sense of the word, have a “sound mind” and enjoy true and complete mental and emotional stability (see 2 Tim. 1:7; cf. Isa. 26:3, 4). None who choose the service of God will be left to the power of Satan (MH 93; cf. DA 38). Fortified by divine power, they become invulnerable against the assaults of Satan (DA 209, 324).

Control by an Evil Spirit.—On the other hand, all who reject or ignore truth declare their allegiance to the evil one (MH 92; DA 322, 341). Those who persistently refuse or neglect to obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit, yielding, instead, to the control of Satan, develop a character that more and more closely resembles his John 8:34, 41, 44; DA 338, 429). The conscience and the power of choice set up a pattern of conduct based on Satan’s principles (see Rom. 6:12–16; DA 256). As men thus progressively separate themselves from the influence and control of the Holy Spirit (see Eph. 4:30; see on Ex. 4:21) they ultimately find themselves completely at the devil’s mercy (DA 256, 323, 324; cf. 645, 696; John 6:70). Held fast by a will stronger than their own, they cannot, of themselves, escape from his evil power (MH 93). They automatically think and act as Satan bids them. Wherever Inspiration points out the cause, it declares that demon possession comes about as the result of wrong living (see DA 256). The fascinating

career of earthly pleasure ends in the darkness of despair or in “the madness of a ruined soul” (DA 256).

Degrees of Demonic Control.—The process of character formation is gradual, and there are, therefore, degrees of control or possession, whether by the Holy Spirit or by evil spirits (see Rom. 12:2). All who do not yield themselves unreservedly to the indwelling of the Spirit of God are thus, in greater or lesser degree, under the control—in the possession—of Satan (see Luke 11:23; Rom. 6:12–16; 2 Peter 2:18, 19; DA 324, 341). Everything not in harmony with the will of God—every intent to injure others, every manifestation of selfishness, every attempt to foster wrong principles—is, in a certain sense of the word, evidence of a degree of demon control, or possession (see DA 246, 341). Every assent to evil results in a weaker body, a darker mind, a more debased soul (DA 341). Nevertheless, at any point in the process of character formation “the character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts” (SC 57, 58). The chief difference between those who respond occasionally and those who respond consistently to the promptings of Satan is thus a difference of degree and not of kind. The life of King Saul is an outstanding example of the experience of those who submit to the control of demons (1 Sam. 13:8–14; 15:10–35; 16:14–23; 28:1–25; PP 679–681).

Forms of Demonic Control.—Not only does the degree of demon control or possession vary, but also the form in which it is manifested. At times Satan can accomplish his sinister purposes more effectively by letting his victim retain his mental and physical faculties quite intact and simulate piety. At other times the devil perverts mind and body and leads the victim to obviously unholy and evil ways. Those only partially under the control of demons, or who do not manifest symptoms popularly associated with demon possession, are often more useful to the prince of evil than those who may be more obviously under his control. The same evil spirit that possessed the maniac of Capernaum also controlled the unbelieving Jews (see John 8:44; DA 256; cf. 323, 733, 746, 749, 760). Judas was “possessed” in a similar sense (DA 294, 645; Luke 22:3; John 6:70, 71; 13:27; cf. Matt. 16:23). In cases such as these the difference is primarily one of the form in which the demons manifest their presence and their power.

Demon Possession and the Human Nervous System.—To whatever degree or in whatever form demons gain control of a human being, they do so through the sensory nervous system. Through the higher powers of the mind—the conscience, the power of choice, and the will—Satan possesses the person. Through the motor nervous system the evil one exercises control over his subjects. Demon possession cannot occur *except* through the nervous system, for through it Satan gains access to the mind, and in turn controls the body (cf. Luke 8:2; DA 568). Inasmuch as the nervous system itself is the first part of the being to be affected, various nervous disorders, such as epilepsy and psychoses of various kinds, are to be expected in connection with demon possession. Such disorders are often the result of yielding, in one way or another, to the influence and suggestions of Satan. However, these disorders do not necessarily accompany demon possession, nor are they necessarily a mark of demon possession any more than deafness and dumbness, which also, at times, accompanied demon possession.

Every case of demon possession described in *The Desire of Ages* is specifically said to have involved some form of mental derangement popularly described as insanity, and this condition is pointed to as the *result* of demon possession. For instance, the demon-

possessed man in the synagogue at Capernaum is described as a “maniac,” and his affliction as “insanity” and “madness” (DA 256). The demoniacs of Gadara are similarly spoken of as “madmen” and “maniacs,” and said to have had “distracted minds” (DA 341; GC 514). The demon-possessed boy at the foot of the mount of the transfiguration is also called a “maniac” (DA 429; see ch. 9:18). Symptoms of nervous disorder specifically mentioned are distortion of the countenance, shrieking, mutilation of the body, glaring with the eyes, gnashing with the teeth, foaming at the mouth, and convulsions closely resembling those of epilepsy (see Mark 1:26; 9:18–26; Luke 4:35; 8:29; DA 256, 337, 429). In each case the expulsion of the evil spirits was accompanied by an instantaneous and evident change—there was a restoration of mental equilibrium and physical health where these had been impaired. Intelligence returned (DA 256, 338), the afflicted ones were clothed again and in their right minds (Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35; DA 338), and their reason was restored (DA 429, 568).

The case of the demon-possessed boy of Mark 9:14–29 deserves special attention. The description of the case strikingly resembles that of an epileptic seizure (see vs. 18–20). But to assert that this was *simply* a case of epilepsy, is to reject the plain statements of Scripture that the boy was demon possessed. The gospel writers are equally explicit in describing a case of what certainly appears to be epilepsy and in attributing it to demon possession.

Demon Possession and Physical Disorders.—In certain cases of demon possession there were also accompanying physical disorders of one kind or another (see Matt. 9:32; 12:22; Mark 9:17). It is worthy of note that the physical disorders specifically mentioned—blindness and dumbness—appear to have been related to the sensory and motor nerves of the affected parts. Other physical maladies may also have resulted from demon possession. Those who gave themselves over, in greater or lesser degree, to the influence and control of Satan thought and lived in such a way as to debase body, mind, and soul (see DA 256, 341, etc.).

Distinguishing Marks of Demon Possession.—So far as Inspiration has indicated, the various manifestations of physical and mental disorder that marked the demon possessed, were, in and of themselves, no different from similar manifestations attributable to natural causes. Apparently the difference lay, not in the nervous and physical symptoms displayed, but in the agency that caused them. Inspiration attributes these symptoms to the direct presence and agency of evil spirits (see GC 514). But the various physical and mental disorders did not, in and of themselves, constitute what the Gospels describe as demon possession. They were the *result* of demon possession.

No doubt the popular mind identified the *results* of demon possession with demon possession itself. But the contention that, out of ignorance, the gospel writers mistakenly attributed various physical and nervous disorders to the agency of evil spirits is disproved by the fact that they clearly distinguished between ordinary bodily afflictions on the one hand and demon possession on the other (see Matt. 4:24; Luke 6:17, 18; 7:21; 8:2). The reality of demon possession is further attested by the fact that Christ addressed the demons as demons and that the demons replied as demons, through the medium of their hapless victims (Mark 1:23, 24; 3:11, 12; 5:7; etc.). By their recognition of the divinity of Christ and of the final judgment—facts not then understood by the people generally—the demons gave evidence of supernatural knowledge (Matt. 8:29; Mark 1:24; 3:11, 12; 5:7; etc.).

It is reasonable to conclude that demon possession, though often accompanied by nervous or physical disorders, exhibited its own characteristic symptoms, but what these symptoms may have been the Scriptures do not say.

Why Demon Possession Was Common.—There is reason to believe that demon possession, in the restricted sense of the gospel writers, was far more common during the time of Christ's personal ministry on earth than it is today (see DA 257). Perhaps, for a time, God permitted Satan greater freedom to demonstrate the results of his personal control of human beings who voluntarily chose to serve him. On the mount of the transfiguration the disciples beheld humanity transfigured into the image of God, and at the foot of the mountain, humanity debased into the likeness of Satan (DA 429).

For ages the devil had been seeking unrestricted control of the bodies and souls of men, in order to afflict them with sin and suffering and finally to ruin them (DA 257; PP 688). Thus, when our Lord appeared walking as a man among men, "the bodies of human beings, made for the dwelling place of God, had become the habitation of demons. The senses, the nerves, the passions, the organs of men, were worked by supernatural agencies in the indulgence of the vilest lust. The very stamp of demons was impressed upon the countenances of men" (DA 36). The very likeness of humanity seemed to have been obliterated from many human faces, which reflected, instead, the expression of the legions of evil with which they were possessed (cf. Luke 8:27; DA 337; GC 514). In a very real way demon possession represents the depths of degradation to which those descend who respond to Satan, and graphically illustrates what all who reject God's mercy will eventually become when wholly given up to satanic jurisdiction (DA 341).

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1–8DA 97–108
2, 3 9T 64
7 5T 224
10 DA 111
12, 13 DA 114
14, 15 DA 231; GC 327
15 DA 233; GC 345, 351; PK 699; TM 64; 8T 20
16–20DA 244–251
23–25EW 29
24 DA 467, 579; MH 91; 8T 208
24–26DA 255
27 DA 256; MH 92
30, 32 MH 29
35 DA 259, 362; MH 30, 52
37, 38 DA 260
40–45DA 262–266
43, 44 DA 264

CHAPTER 2

1 *Christ healeth one sick of the palsy, 14 calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom, 15 eateth with publicans and sinners, 18 excuseth his disciples for not fasting, 23 and for plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day.*

1. Again he entered. [*The Paralytic Lowered Through the Roof, Mark 2:1–12=Matt. 9:2–8=Luke 5:17–26.* Major comment: Mark. See Early Galilean Ministry; The Ministry

of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] Or, “he returned” (RSV). Mark characteristically uses the Greek word *palin*, “again,” in referring to places he has mentioned previously, or to similar circumstances (see chs. 2:13; 3:1, 20; 4:1; 5:21; 8:13). By way of contrast, Matthew commonly uses *palin* to introduce a new section of his narrative. Both Matthew and Mark note the fact that Jesus had recently returned from His first tour through the towns and villages of Galilee (see Matt. 9:1). Matthew adds the information that Christ’s return to Capernaum was by boat. Evidently either His first tour ended on the eastern shore of the Lake of Galilee, or He had retired to that region when the publicity given Him by the healed leper led to a temporary withdrawal from public ministry (see on Mark 1:45).

Capernaum. See on Matt. 4:13. Matthew refers to Capernaum as Christ’s “own city”; that is, the headquarters from which He conducted His Galilean ministry and which He seems to have considered His home.

After some days. Gr. *di’ hēmerōn*, “after days.” This phrase is taken by some to refer to the whole period of Jesus’ First Galilean Tour, between the time of His departure from Capernaum (ch. 1:35–38) and His return to that city. Inasmuch, however, as that tour probably extended over a number of weeks, it may be more appropriate to understand the “days” here as being those during which Jesus retreated into the desert because of the crowds, when He “could no longer openly enter a town” (ch. 1:45, RSV). Thus understood, the period in question would be that between the events narrated at the end of ch. 1 and those at the beginning of ch. 2.

It was noised. Literally, “It was heard.”

That. Gr. *hoti*, “that,” which implies that the following words, literally, “he is in the house,” are a direct quotation of what was being reported by people generally.

In the house. Only Mark specifically mentions this fact, as is true of numerous details of the narrative that the other synoptists omit. This was equivalent to saying “at home,” a reference without doubt to the home of Peter (see DA 267, 271; see on ch. 1:29).

2. Straightway. Christ’s departure from Capernaum for His first missionary tour was occasioned by the popular excitement and the great throngs of people who came seeking Him (see ch. 1:33, 37). But His absence from Capernaum left the enthusiasm of the people unabated. No sooner was it known that Jesus was again in the city than the people flocked to Him.

3. One sick of the palsy. Gr. *paralutikos*, “a paralytic.”

Borne of four. A detail given by Mark only. This and other details not only reflect the factual nature of the account but also mark it as the account of an eyewitness, in this case probably Peter (see p. 563).

4. The press. That is, the throng of people.

Uncovered the roof. Literally, “unroofed the roof.” Luke (ch. 5:19) records that they “let him down through the tiling.” As is common in the Middle East, this house doubtless had a flat roof, with a stairway or ladder on the outside which gave access to it from the courtyard below (see Acts 10:9; cf. on Deut. 22:8). Apparently the roof was made by laying tiles over the rafters.

This unusual method of reaching Jesus was the desperate suggestion of the paralytic himself, who feared that, though now so close to Jesus, he might yet lose his opportunity

(see DA 268). The way in which Jesus had left Capernaum so unexpectedly (ch. 1:37, 38), had remained away for several weeks, and finally had secluded Himself in the desert (ch. 1:45), probably added to the desperation of this man, who faced the prospect of an early death (see DA 267).

Bed. Gr. *krabbatos*, a poor man's "couch," or "bed." The rude pallet on which the man lay was probably little more than a grass mat or a padded quilt.

5. Their faith. That is, of the four stretcher bearers and the paralytic. Their tearing of a hole through the roof spoke eloquently of their urgent sense of need, and of their faith that only Jesus could satisfy it. Such consciousness of need and such faith are essential before the healing power of Jesus can be applied to either body or soul (see on Luke 5:8).

Son. Gr. *teknon*, literally, "child." When used in an address as here, it means "my child," "my son." Inasmuch as his disease had come upon him as the direct result of profligate living (DA 267), it would seem that his story must have been much like that of the prodigal son (see Luke 15:13, 14). The same had apparently been true in the case of the paralytic healed at Bethesda a few months previously (see John 5:14).

Thy sins be forgiven thee. See on v. 10. Affliction had given him time for reflection, and he had come to realize that his own sins were responsible for his suffering. It was to these sins, which now weighed so heavily on his mind, that Jesus referred. The paralytic came seeking for health of soul as well as for healing of body (see DA 267, 268). He was physically helpless and spiritually hopeless, until he presented his case to Jesus, who provided both help and hope. See on John 9:2.

6. The scribes. See p. 55, and on ch. 1:22. According to Luke (see on ch. 5:17) these "Pharisees and doctors of the law" came from all parts of "Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem." The coming of representatives from so many different places suggests that their presence upon this particular occasion was more than casual. The fact that these religious officials were from precisely the areas in which Jesus thus far had worked would seem to indicate that they were at Capernaum to investigate the One who had become the center of such intense public interest. The situation recalls the delegation that the leaders in Jerusalem dispatched to the Jordan to investigate the work of John the Baptist (John 1:19–28) two years previously. The present delegation from Judea, where Jesus had previously worked, may have been summoned to advise the leaders in Galilee regarding their course of action in view of Jesus' more recent activities there.

These men were spies (see DA 267; cf. 213), and as if to remind them vividly of the healing of the paralytic at Bethesda (John 5:1–9), Jesus now healed another man suffering from the same disease. They did not have long to wait before finding what they were looking for—alleged evidence that Jesus was a blasphemer. His earlier statement before the Jewish leaders had been branded blasphemy (John 5:18); now He exercised publicly a divine prerogative that they likewise took to be blasphemy. This incident marks the first of Jesus' several controversies with the Jewish authorities during His Galilean ministry.

Reasoning. Gr. *dialogizomai*, "to balance accounts," "to converse," "to debate," "to argue."

7. This man. Gr. *houtos*, "this [one]," as if spoken in contempt. They thought they had caught Jesus in the act of blasphemy, but strangely enough, the evidence was not such that they could bring it against Him at His trial a year and a half later (Matt. 26:59, 60; Mark 14:55, 56). Their difficulty lay in the fact that He confronted them with the

practical operation of the power of Deity—in forgiving sin and healing disease—rather than the assertion of specific Messianic claims. See p. 209.

Blasphemies. Gr. *blasphēmiai*, “injurious speeches,” “slanders,” that is, any derogatory statements. The scribes assumed that in forgiving the paralytic’s sins Jesus, a mere man as they claimed, had usurped the prerogatives of Deity. Under the ceremonial system the priest presided over a man’s confession but did not actually speak words of forgiveness. His acceptance of the sacrifice merely symbolized God’s acceptance of the confession (see Heb. 10:1–12). By their refusal to recognize evidence of the presence and operation of divinity the scribes were committing the very sin of which, in their hearts, they accused Christ (see Matt. 12:22–32). The Levitical penalty for blasphemy was death by stoning (Lev. 24:16), although the Jews in Jesus’ time were not generally at liberty to carry it out.

Who can forgive? The scribes were strictly correct so far as their theology was concerned, for the OT clearly pointed to God as the One who forgives sin (Isa. 43:25; Jer. 31:34; cf. John 10:33). Their error was in failing to recognize that the Man who stood before them was God. See p. 209.

8. Perceived. Gr. *epiginoskō*, “to know accurately,” “to recognize.” Repeatedly Jesus read men’s thoughts (Mark 12:15; Luke 6:8; 9:47; 11:17; cf. John 4:16–19; 8:7–9). This generally had the effect of making them furiously angry.

9. Whether is it easier? Apparently the scribes were thinking, “It is easy to say that a man’s sins are forgiven, for no one can really tell whether they are.” Jesus immediately took up their unspoken challenge and, in substance, inquired: “Which would *you* find easier, to forgive a man’s sins or to heal him of paralysis?” The answer was obvious.

10. That ye may know. Jesus offered a miracle that all could see as evidence of the reality of a far greater miracle that they could not see (cf. Rom. 1:20).

The Son of man. Here, for the first time, all three synoptic writers use this distinctive title (Matt. 9:6; Mark 2:10; Luke 5:24). It was Christ’s favorite designation for Himself, and appears in the Gospels some 80 times. No one, however, addressed Him by this title, nor do any of the gospel writers refer to Him by it. This title was understood at least among some Jews as a name for the Messianic ruler of the new kingdom to be established. Except under oath (Matt. 26:63, 64; Mark 14:61, 62), and in private to those ready to believe in Him as the Christ (Matt. 16:16, 17; John 3:13–16; 4:25, 26; 16:30, 31), Jesus made no direct Messianic claims. It was His purpose that men should recognize in His life, His words, and His works, evidence that the prophecies of the Messiah had met their fulfillment in Him. See p. 209.

Jesus was literally “the Son of man,” both in a purely historic sense (see Luke 1:31–35; Rom. 1:3, 4; Gal. 4:4) and in a higher sense. The title, Son of man, designates Him as the incarnate Christ (see John 1:14; Phil. 2:6–8). It points to the miracle whereby Creator and creature were united in one divine-human person. It testifies to the truth that sons of men may indeed become sons of God (John 1:12; Gal. 4:3–7; 1 John 3:1, 2). Deity was identified with humanity in order that humanity might be made over again into the image of divinity (DA 25). Concerning Jesus as the Son of God, see on Luke 1:35; John 1:1–3; and as Son of man, on Luke 2:49, 52; John 1:14; see Additional Note on John 1.

Power. Gr. *exousia*, “authority.” The usual Greek word for “power,” in the sense of “might” or “strength,” is *dunamis*. To work a miracle required *power*, but the forgiveness

of sin was a matter of *authority*. In the present passage, *exousia* stands at the beginning of the clause, and so emphasizes Christ's authority to forgive sin. The Jewish leaders repeatedly challenged this authority (see ch. 11:28).

Forgive sins. The cause of the disease must be removed before the sufferer could be relieved of the disease from which he suffered (see on v. 5). Healing of the body without healing of the soul could result only in a repetition of the course the young man had taken that brought on the disease. Therefore Christ, who gave the man a new body, first provided him with a new heart.

He saith. The parenthetical statement introduced by these words is inserted in the middle of Jesus' pronouncement to indicate that at this point He turned from the scribes and addressed Himself to the paralytic. It appears at the same place in all three accounts of the narrative (see Matt. 9:6; Luke 5:24). Similar examples of identical language may be found in Mark 1:16 and Matt. 4:18; Mark 5:28 and Matt. 9:21; Mark 14:2 and Matt. 26:5; Mark 15:10 and Matt. 27:18. See pp. 177, 178; cf. pp. 306, 307.

11. I say unto thee. Gr. *soi legō*, "to thee I say." The order of the words in Greek emphasizes here the one to whom Jesus was speaking. The words of v. 10 He addressed to the unbelieving scribes; now, as a proof to them, He turned to the paralytic and said, "To *thee* I say, Arise." The power to heal physically was evidence of the authority to heal spiritually.

Take up thy bed. The sufferer had been carried to Jesus on his bed; he now leaves the presence of Jesus carrying his bed, an evidence of the great transformation that had occurred.

Go thy way into thine house. That is, "Go home" (RSV).

12. On this fashion. Or, "anything like this." The man who had come into the presence of Jesus with a profound sense of need went away in triumphant joy, while those who came in self-satisfaction, pride, and malice went away "dumb with amazement and overwhelmed with defeat" (DA 270). The spirit in which men approach Jesus determines whether they find in Him a steppingstone to heaven or a stumbling block to destruction (see Matt. 21:44; Luke 2:34; 1 Peter 2:8).

13. He went forth again. [*Call of Levi Matthew, Mark 2:13, 14=Matt. 9:9=Luke 5:27, 28.* Major comment: Mark. See Early Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord.] Apparently this was but a short journey in the vicinity of Capernaum, and not a major preaching tour of Galilee. The second such tour, which was preceded by the appointment of the Twelve and the Sermon on the Mount, did not begin until somewhat later.

14. He saw. See on Luke 5:27.

Levi. Luke also uses this name (ch. 5:27), but Matthew in the same story prefers the name Matthew (ch. 9:9). That the two names refer to the same man is indicated further by the fact that Matthew also is called "the publican [taxgatherer]" (ch. 10:3), and by the fact that in their lists of the Twelve, the other Gospels have Matthew and not Levi (Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; cf. Acts 1:13). It was common for Jews to have more than one name, as Simon Peter and John Mark. See on Mark 3:14.

The son of Alphaeus. Some have thought to identify "Levi the son of Alphaeus" with "James the son of Alphaeus" (ch. 3:18). However, in view of the evidence given above for the identity of Levi with Matthew, it appears certain that Levi and James were different men; whether they were brothers it is impossible to say (see on ch. 3:18).

The receipt of custom. That is, the tax office. It apparently was “by the sea side” (v. 13), and was probably an office at which Herod Antipas collected revenue from caravans and travelers passing along the main highway from Damascus and the East to Ptolemais (Accho) on the Mediterranean (see on Isa. 9:1), or over the Lake of Galilee from the territory of Herod Philip. As to the strategic, commercial location of Capernaum see on Matt. 4:13 and Luke 4:31.

In popular opinion tax collectors were considered disreputable. Not only were they frequently agents of Roman oppression, they also were often extortioners on their own account, who made use of their official power to oppress and defraud the people. They were hated and despised by all, as social and religious outcasts. See p. 66; see on Luke 3:12.

Follow me. The usual language Christ used in extending His invitation to discipleship (see Matt. 4:19; John 1:43). Called upon to make the great decision of his life on a moment’s notice, Matthew was ready; such a decision would presuppose his having had previous contact with Jesus. In his heart there must have been already a longing to follow Him. But since he knew full well the attitude of the rabbis toward tax collectors, it doubtless did not occur to him that this great Rabbi would condescend to have him among His disciples. Luke (ch. 5:28) adds that Matthew “left all” in order to follow Jesus; he left a profitable business to serve without pay.

15. Sat. [*Matthew’s Feast, Mark 2:15–17=Matt. 9:10–13=Luke 5:29–32.* Major comment: Mark. See Middle Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord.] Gr.

katakeimai, “to lie down.” Although in OT times it was usually the Jewish custom to sit while eating, by the time of Jesus, in the more pretentious houses at least, people commonly lay down to eat on a low platform or couch sloping away from the table. They rested on cushions and supported themselves by their left arms. The usual table was equipped on three sides with such slanting platforms, the fourth side being left open for attendants to serve the food. That Matthew’s home was equipped with such a table suggests that he was a man of means and culture.

Evidently the feast in Matthew’s home took place some weeks, perhaps months, after his call (see DA 342; see on ch. 5:21). It is recorded here probably in order to complete, in one context, the account of Matthew’s experiences.

At meat. Or, “at table” (RSV). This expression has been supplied by the translators to complete the idea implicit in the context (see v. 16).

In his house. The context makes apparent that this was Matthew’s house, and that Jesus was the guest of honor (see also Luke 5:29; cf. DA 274).

Publicans. Gr. *telōnai*, “tax collectors,” “revenue agents” (see on Mark 2:14; Luke 3:12).

Sinners. See on v. 17. Such contacts as this, seeming at the time fruitless perhaps, doubtless contributed to producing the harvest of those who took their stand with the followers of Jesus, and became witnesses to the truth, when the Spirit was poured out upon the believers at Pentecost (see DA 274, 275).

They. That is, those who accepted His teachings. Some in addition to Matthew apparently took their stand for Jesus now; others doubtless did so later, particularly after the resurrection (see DA 275).

16. Scribes and Pharisees. Important textual evidence (cf. p. 146) may also be cited for the reading, “scribes of the Pharisees,” that is, scribes who were Pharisees. While

some of the scribes were Sadducees, most were Pharisees, for it was the latter who took a particular interest in the minutiae of the law (see pp. 51, 52, 55). We may think of them as “Pharisee scribes” rather than “Sadducee scribes.”

Disciples. Gr. *mathētai*, “learners,” “pupils.” In the Gospels this word is generally used of the group that accompanied Jesus and assisted Him in His ministry. The disciples were *mathētai*; Christ was their *didaskalos*, “master” or “teacher” (see on John 3:2).

By complaining to the disciples, the scribes hoped to alienate their respect for their Master. Luke says that the scribes “murmured” against the disciples (Luke 5:30), apparently realizing that a direct attack on Jesus would avail them nothing, even as previous attempts to silence Him had proved fruitless (see Mark 2:6–11; John 2:18–20; 5:16–47).

Eateth and drinketh. To eat and drink with Gentiles was an infraction of the ritual law and involved ceremonial uncleanness (Acts 11:3). For practical purposes, tax collectors were classed with the Gentiles and thus were considered among the social outcasts (see on Mark 2:14; Luke 3:12, 13).

17. They that are whole. Gr. *hoi ischuontes*, “those having strength.” Luke reads, *hoi hugiainontes*, “those who are sound.” Luke’s expression is a more exact term, from *hugiēs*, a usual Greek word for “health.” Paul repeatedly uses the same word as does Luke, and applies it to “sound” doctrine (1 Tim. 1:10), “sound” words (2 Tim. 1:13), and of being “sound” in the faith (Titus 1:13).

I came not. In stating the profound truth of the purpose of His mission to earth Christ revealed the hypocrisy and fallacy of the Pharisees and their attitude toward Christ’s association with tax collectors. If these men were such sinners as the Pharisees claimed, they must be in greater need than other men. Were they not then the very ones for whom Christ should put forth His best efforts? He had come to “save” men (Matt. 1:21), but if He were able only to save those who were already righteous, He could not be truly a Saviour. The test of His mission as the Saviour of men turned on the point of what He could do for sinners.

The righteous. The Pharisees claimed to be able to attain righteousness through strict compliance with the requirements of the ritual law. Later, Jesus made it clear that such “righteousness” was counterfeit and without value in the kingdom He had come to proclaim (Matt. 5:20; cf. ch. 23:1–33). But on this occasion, for the sake of argument, He granted their implied claim to personal righteousness (Mark 2:16, 17), for by so doing He was able to make clear the reason why He ought to minister to the spiritual needs of the publicans.

In actual fact, the Pharisees were at times guilty of the very sins they so bitterly detested in the tax collectors. Jesus declared that they would “devour widows’ houses” (Matt. 23:14) and release an avaricious son from caring for aged parents (see on Mark 7:11), if thereby they themselves might be enriched. Thus the Pharisees, laying emphasis on legal correctness, too often were hypocrites. On the other hand, the publicans, who made no pretense at ritualistic respectability, were sometimes in a better position to accept the teaching of Jesus, in spite of their sins. See on Luke 18:9–14.

18. The disciples of John. [*The Question About Fasting, Mark 2:18–22=Matt. 9:14–17=Luke 5:33–39.* Major comment: Mark. See Middle Galilean Ministry; on parables pp. 203–207.]

Used to fast. Probably better, “were fasting.” Doubtless John’s disciples shared at least to some extent in his abstemious way of life (see Matt. 3:4), as is evidenced here by their fasting. It seems clear that they were, indeed, fasting at the very time they brought their question to Jesus.

An ancient Jewish treatise on fasting from the 1st century A.D., *Megillath Ta’anith*, mentions Jews who at that time regularly fasted on the second and fifth days of the week, that is, Monday and Thursday (see Luke 18:12). Although Jewish tradition attributes this custom to the story that Moses began his 40-day fast on Mt. Sinai (see Ex. 34:28) on a Thursday and terminated it on a Monday, it seems probable that the observance of these two days as fasts actually arose from the desire to keep them as far as possible from the Sabbath, and at the same time not to have them too close together. See Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 2, pp. 241–243.

Strack and Billerbeck, leading authorities on ancient Judaism, indicate that the exact motives behind these biweekly fasts are not entirely clear, but it seems probable that they arose through a desire on the part of particularly earnest people to seek to atone for the worldliness of the nation, which they felt was fast bringing on its destruction. In general among the ancient Jews fasting was undertaken by individuals in order to make good a misdeed or to ensure the favorable answer to a prayer or fulfillment of a wish. Indeed, many seem to have fasted because they believed such an act earned special merit for them before God.

These uses of fasting rested, of course, upon a misconception of the character of God and of the nature of righteousness. Too often fasting degenerated into a means of righteousness by works through which men hoped to appease an austere God and earn His favor, regardless of the state of their hearts. Centuries before the time of Jesus the prophets had denounced such ideas, declaring that God had come to abhor Israel’s fasts and other religious observances (Isa. 58:3–5; Zech. 7:5, 6).

There are times when the Christian needs keenness of thought and discriminating judgment; he may have important decisions to make, or may need to discern more clearly the will of God. Under such circumstances fasting can prove a great blessing. Such fasting may not necessarily mean complete abstinence from food, but a diet limited to the simple essentials for maintaining health and vigor. The Christian may, like Daniel, refrain from the use of “pleasant bread” (Dan 10:3). God is not honored and one’s Christian experience is not promoted by any practice that weakens the body or impairs the health. See Matt. 6:16.

They come and say. Those here designated are not clearly identified, nor is the Gospel of Luke clearer in this respect (see Luke 5:33). However, Matthew states definitely that it was the disciples of John the Baptist who plied Jesus with the query in regard to fasting (Matt. 9:14).

According to the tentative chronology adopted in this commentary, John had been imprisoned in the early spring of this year, A.D. 29, and probably was executed shortly before the Passover of A.D. 30 (see on Matt. 4:12; Mark 6:14–29; Luke 3:19, 20). His disciples raised their question on fasting probably not more than a few months before he died.

Thy disciples fast not. Thus the scribes apparently hoped to alienate the rapidly growing body of disciples from their Master.

19. Children of the bridechamber. A contemporary Jewish idiom for wedding guests. The comparison Jesus used here has its roots in OT prophecy, where Jehovah's relation to His people is depicted as that of the bridegroom to the bride (Isa. 62:5; cf. Hosea 1:2). John had already used the same figure to explain His relationship to the Messiah (ch. 3:25–30), upon the former occasion when the Jewish leaders had sought to drive a wedge of rivalry between John and Jesus, probably a year or so prior to this occasion. It seems significant, therefore, that Jesus used this brief figure in the presence of the disciples of John the Baptist.

In no particular did Jesus deviate from the religious requirements He Himself had enjoined on Israel through Moses. Contention between Himself and the Pharisees centered in the traditions of the elders, the “heavy burdens” that were “grievous to be borne” (Matt. 23:4). These traditional requirements had been elevated to a position of such honor and importance that at times they were allowed even to counteract the true spirit of the law of Moses (ch. 15:3–6; cf. DA 395). Thus the form of religion that the scribes and Pharisees sought to impose upon the people rendered their worship of God “vain” and meaningless (Mark 7:7). See on Matt. 23:2, 3.

What Jesus now set forth, in three brief figures, was the incompatibility of His teachings with those of the scribes. John's disciples, although presumably accepting Christ as the Messiah (see John 1:35–37), nevertheless adhered at least to some of the ritual regulations imposed by the scribes and Pharisees (Mark 2:18). In the parable of the wedding guests, “the children of the bridechamber,” Christ defended His own disciples against the charge that they did not conform likewise to tradition. He implied that ritual practices were to be subordinated to concerns of higher importance. Then by the examples of the new wine (v. 22) and the new cloth (v. 21), Jesus developed still further the fundamental principle involved—the irreconcilable difference between the new teachings and the old. Here He explained why He considered rabbinical ritual observances as of no value. Taken together, these three parables were designed to make clear to the disciples of John the Baptist that if they truly believed the teachings of their master, they would accept His also.

They cannot fast. It would be considered an insult to the bride and groom should the wedding guests be mournful and gloomy and refuse to partake of the wedding feast.

20. The days will come. Here for the first time Christ publicly implied that eventually He would be taken from His disciples, like a bridegroom forcibly taken from the wedding festivities. More than a year before this He had told Nicodemus in private that He would be “lifted up” (John 3:14).

Taken away. Gr. *apairō*, “to lift off,” “to carry away.” In the present context the word may imply forced and painful separation, as was true in the violent death of Jesus.

He was “taken away” from them at the cross, and restored to them after the resurrection.

21. No man also seweth. See on Luke 5:36. In this extended metaphor, or brief parable, Christ points out the folly of attempting to patch the old mantle of Judaism with the new fabric of His teachings.

Piece. Rather, “a patch.” Jesus' teachings were not simply a patch to be applied to the worn-out Jewish religious system.

New. Gr. *agnaphos*, “uncarded,” hence, “new,” here meaning “unbleached,” or “unshrunk.”

An old garment. Here Judaism is compared to a worn-out cloak, one that has become useless and is on the point of being discarded. The original spirit of the Jewish religion had long since been lost by the majority of those who adhered to it, and in its place there had grown up a system of forms. By the use of this figure Christ endeavored to make clear to the disciples of John the Baptist the futility of trying to interweave the good news of the kingdom of heaven with the worn-out observances of Jewish tradition.

Made worse. That is, when the garment first becomes wet after the application of the patch. What is intended to improve the old mantle only serves to make its defects more evident.

22. *New wine.* See on Luke 5:39. By “new wine” is meant wine in which the forces of fermentation have not begun their work, or in which the work has been begun but not completed. The representation of the gospel by “new wine” and its work by the process of fermentation resembles in essence the parable of the leaven, but emphasizes a different result (see on Matt. 13:33). The “new wine” represents the vital truth of God at work in the hearts of men.

Bottles. In ancient times these would be wineskins, which were skins of sheep or goats with the skin of the legs sewn up, and the neck serving as a mouth of the bottle. “Old bottles” would have lost their original resilience, and become dry and hard. Such was the condition of Judaism in the time of Christ.

Burst the bottles. Jesus’ revolutionary teachings could not be reconciled with the reactionary dogmas of Judaism. Any effort to contain Christianity within the dead forms of Judaism, that is, to unite the two by forcing Christianity to take the shape of, and be reconciled to it, would prove vain. Jesus taught that the principles of the kingdom of heaven applied to the souls of men would lead to the outworking of those principles in lives of active, radiant religion (see on Matt 5:2).

Wine is spilled. The attempt to unite the new with the old would result in two-fold destruction. The “wine” of the gospel would be “spilled,” and the “bottles” of Judaism would be “marred.”

New bottles. Probably either a reference to the people ready to receive the gospel or to the new type of church organization through which the gospel was to be promoted.

23. *It came to pass.* [*Plucking Grain on the Sabbath, Mark 2:23–28=Matt. 12:1–8=Luke 6:1–5.* Major comment: Mark. See Early Galilean Ministry.] This incident probably took place on a Sabbath day in the late spring of A.D. 29, since it is grouped with events of that period of time.

Through the corn fields. Or, “beside the fields of grain.” Undoubtedly the disciples were not walking through the grain, treading it down, but along a path that went through the fields.

On the sabbath. Inasmuch as the Pharisees here made no objection to the distance covered, it would seem that it was not more than a Sabbath day’s journey, that is, about 2/3 mi. (see p. 50).

Of corn. Literally, “of grain”; in this instance almost certainly either wheat or barley. Luke (see ch. 6:1) adds that the disciples began rubbing the barley or wheat in their hands to remove the hulls.

24. Pharisees said. This is Christ's fourth recorded encounter with the scribes and Pharisees since the opening of His Galilean ministry (see vs. 6, 16, 18; see on Luke 6:6).

Not lawful. Upon any other day of the week than the Sabbath the action of the disciples would undoubtedly have passed unchallenged, for OT law specifically provided that a hungry person could eat of the fruit or grain of a field as he passed (see on Deut. 23:24, 25).

Christ's approval of what His disciples did here, and His own acts of healing upon the Sabbath day, are often misunderstood by modern writers as proof that He neither observed personally nor taught His disciples to observe the OT laws and regulations in regard to Sabbath observance. Some also assert that the stand Christ took with regard to these matters is to be interpreted as a rejection by Him of the fourth commandment. The facts are that Jesus personally adhered to the requirements of the law of Moses and the Decalogue in every respect and taught His followers to do the same. He repeatedly affirmed the eternally binding nature of the moral law (see on Matt. 5:17, 18; John 15:10; etc.), and recognized also the validity of the ritual law of Moses as applicable to Jews at that time (see on Matt. 23:3). Jesus, of course, was a Jew.

But throughout His ministry on earth Christ was in conflict with the Jewish leaders over the validity of man-made laws and traditions (see on Mark 7:2, 3, 8). Toward these requirements, which apparently many of His contemporaries had come to regard as even more essential to piety than the laws of Moses and the Decalogue, Christ took a position of uncompromising opposition (see on ch. 2:19). The most cursory examination of many of these requirements makes their absurdity evident, yet the Pharisees sternly taught that salvation was to be obtained through the rigorous observance of all these rules. A pious Jew's life tended to become one endless and vain effort to avoid ceremonial uncleanness, incurred when the least detail of these purely human requirements might have been disobeyed inadvertently. This system of righteousness by works was in mortal conflict with righteousness by faith.

The Mishnah lists 39 primary, or major, types of labor prohibited on the Sabbath day (*Shabbath* 7. 2, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, pp. 348, 349). The first 11 of these were steps leading to the production and preparation of bread: sowing, plowing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, selecting (sorting what was unfit for food from what was fit), grinding, sifting, kneading, and baking. The next 12 apply to similar steps in the preparation of clothing, from the shearing of sheep to the actual sewing of garments. These are followed by 7 steps in preparing the carcass of a deer for use as food or for leather. The remaining items listed have to do with writing, building, the kindling and extinguishing of fires, and the transportation of articles from one place to another.

These general regulations were further explained in minute detail. In addition to these major regulations there were countless other provisions concerning the observance of the Sabbath. Most commonly known, perhaps, is the so-called "sabbath day's journey" of 2,000 cu.— somewhat less than 2/3 mi. (see on p. 50). It was also counted as Sabbathbreaking to look in a mirror fixed to the wall (*Shabbath* 149a, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 759), or even to light a candle. Yet the same regulations permitted an egg laid on the Sabbath to be sold to a Gentile, and a Gentile to be hired to light a candle or a fire. It was counted unlawful to expectorate upon the ground, lest thereby a blade of grass be irrigated. It was not permissible to carry a handkerchief on the Sabbath, unless one end of it be sewed to one's garment—in which case it was no longer technically a handkerchief

but part of the garment. Similarly the regulation concerning the distance one might walk on the Sabbath day could be circumvented by hiding portions of food at appropriate intervals along the way one expected to take. Technically, then, the place where one's food reposed could be considered as another "home" of the owner. From each such cache of food it was then possible to take another Sabbath day's journey, on to the next similar cache. Such were but a few of the "heavy burdens and grievous to be borne" (Matt. 23:4) that had been placed upon the pious Jews of Christ's day.

By thus straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel the Pharisees were continually employing the letter of man-made laws to destroy the spirit of the law of God. The Sabbath, designed originally to afford man an opportunity to know his Maker through a study of the things He had made, and to reflect upon His love and goodness, became, instead, a reminder of the selfish and arbitrary character of Pharisee and scribe. It effectively misrepresented the character of God, by picturing Him as a tyrant.

Nature declares the wisdom, power, and love of God, and it was to these things that the Sabbath was designed in the beginning to direct man's attention, lest man become so absorbed in his own activities that he forget the One who gave him his being and who constantly exerted divine power for his happiness and welfare. The problem some modern Christians find in determining what may or may not be appropriate as a Sabbath activity is readily solved once the purpose of the Sabbath is clearly in mind. Whatever draws us closer to God, helps us to understand better His will for us and His ways of dealing with us, and leads us to cooperate more effectively with Him in our own lives and in contributing to the happiness and well-being of others—this is true Sabbath observance (see on Isa. 58:13; Mark 2:27, 28).

25. *Have ye never read?* Jesus implies that in their study of the Scriptures they missed the lesson implicit in the incident He is about to relate.

When he had need. The sacred laws and things pertaining to the sanctuary had been ordained for the good of man, and if ever these should conflict with his best interests, with that which was most needful for him, they must be subordinated.

26. *House of God.* At the time of the incident here referred to the Temple had not yet been built. The "house of God" still consisted only of the tabernacle, at that time at Nob.

Abiathar. Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech, who was titular high priest at the time this incident occurred (see 1 Sam. 21:1, 6). The words of Jesus seem to suggest that Abiathar was deputy to his aging father and so actually performing at least some of the functions of the high priestly office even during the latter's lifetime, and under his supervision. When Ahimelech was slain Abiathar fled to David, carrying with him the sacred ephod, symbol of the high priestly office (see 1 Sam. 22:20). An analogous situation prevailed in Christ's day, when Caiaphas was high priest, but Annas was recognized by all as being a kind of high priest emeritus (see Acts 4:6; see on Luke 3:2).

Shewbread. See on Ex. 25:30. Elaborate rules for the preparation and use of the "bread of the Presence" set it apart as holy. The old bread, removed from the table of shewbread in the holy place, was to be eaten by the priests within the sacred precincts of the sanctuary (see on Lev. 24:5–8).

Not lawful to eat. None but the priests might eat the consecrated bread (see Lev. 24:9).

27. *Sabbath.* See on Gen. 2:1–3; Ex. 20:8–11.

For. Literally, "for the sake of."

Man. Gr. *anthrōpos*, literally, “a person,” a generic term including men, women, and children (see on ch. 6:44). “Mankind” would reflect the meaning of *anthrōpos* more accurately. The Sabbath was designed and ordained by a loving Creator for the welfare of humanity. It is only by the wildest stretch of reasoning that a person could consider the Sabbath “against” man in any respect (see on Col. 2:14).

Not man for the sabbath. God did not create man because He had a Sabbath and needed someone to keep it. Rather, an Allwise Creator knew that man, the creature of His hand, needed opportunity for moral and spiritual growth, for character development. He needed time in which his own interests and pursuits should be subordinated to a study of the character and will of God as revealed in nature, and later, in revelation. The seventh-day Sabbath was ordained of God to meet this need. To tamper in any way with the Creator’s specifications as to when and how the day should be observed is tantamount to denying that God knows what is best for the creatures of His hand.

God ordained that the Sabbath should be a blessing, not a burden, and it is to man’s interest and not his injury to observe it. It was designed to increase his happiness, not to work a hardship on him. Sabbath-keeping does not consist essentially in the petty observance of certain formalities and in abstention from certain pursuits; to think of it in this light is to miss completely the true spirit and objectives of Sabbath observance and to engage in the pursuit of righteousness based on works. We refrain from certain tasks, from certain pursuits, from certain topics of thought and conversation, not because that by so doing we think to win favor with God. We refrain from these things in order that we may devote our time, our energies, and our thought to other pursuits that will increase our understanding of God, our appreciation of His goodness, our capacity to cooperate with Him, and our ability to serve Him and our fellow men more effectively. Sabbathkeeping that consists only, or primarily, in the negative aspect of *not* doing certain things is not Sabbathkeeping at all; it is only when the positive aspect of Sabbathkeeping is practiced that we may hope to derive from Sabbath observance the benefit ordained by a wise and loving Creator. See on Isa. 58:13.

The legion requirements of the rabbis pertaining to the meticulous observance of the Sabbath were based on the concept that the Sabbath was of more importance in the sight of God than man himself. According to the apparent reasoning of these blind exponents of the divine law, man was made for the Sabbath—made to keep it mechanically. The rabbis reduced the Sabbath to an absurdity by their rigid and meaningless distinction between what might and what might not be done on that day (see on v. 24). They emphasized the negative aspect of Sabbath observance—of refraining from certain things. The forms of religion were set forth as the substance of it.

28. Therefore. After pointing to the purpose of the Sabbath (v. 27) Christ directs attention to its Author, and thus to His own right to determine how that purpose shall best be realized.

Son of man. See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:20; see Additional Note on John 1.

Lord. The Saviour Himself has the right to determine what is appropriate to that day; consequently, the Pharisees were exceeding their prerogatives (see v. 24). The church has no right to load the Sabbath with oppressive restrictions—as did the Jews—or to attempt the transfer of its sacredness from one day to another. Both are devices of the evil one designed to lure men away from the true spirit of Sabbath observance. Man has no right

to tamper with the day of God's choosing, whether he be Pharisee or Christian ecclesiastic.

Also. Or, "even." The complete line of reasoning Christ set before the caviling Pharisees is more clearly presented in the account given by Matthew, as follows: (1) Human need is of more importance than ritual requirements or human traditions (see Matt. 12:3, 4). (2) The labor performed in connection with the Temple service is in keeping with the requirements of the Sabbath day (see v. 5). (3) Christ is greater than either the Temple (see v. 6) or the Sabbath day (see v. 8).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-12DA 262-271

3-53T 168

5 COL 125; MH 174; 6T 232

5-116T 234

6 8T 202

7 DA 269; MH 76

10 DA 270

12 DA 269; MH 77

14-22DA 272-280

17 COL 58; FE 252; TM 230, 351; 2T 74; 3T 49; 4T 42; 5T 219

20 DA 277

27 1T 533; 2T 582; 4T 247

27, 28 DA 285, 288

28 GC 447

1

CHAPTER 3

1 *Christ healeth the withered hand, 10 and many other infirmities: 11 rebuketh the unclean spirits: 13 chooseth his twelve apostles: 22 convinceth the blasphemy of casting out devils by Beelzebub: 31 and sheweth who are his brother, sister, and mother.*

1. He entered again. [*The Man With a Withered Hand, Mark 3:1-6=Matt. 12:9-14=Luke 6:6-11.* Major comment: Mark and Luke. See Early Galilean Ministry; on miracles pp. 208-213.] This was apparently not the same Sabbath as that mentioned in ch. 2:23. It is mentioned here as another instance in which the scribes and Pharisees took exception to the attitude of Jesus toward the Sabbath.

Had a withered hand. Or, "having his hand withered." The Greek indicates that the withering of the hand was due to accident or to the results of disease rather than to a congenital defect.

2. They watched. See on Luke 6:7. It is clear that the Pharisees are here intended (see Mark 3:6).

4. Life. Gr. *psuchē* (see on Matt. 10:28).

Held their peace. Their sullen silence was an admission of defeat. Previous encounters with Jesus had taught them that nothing could be gained by challenging Him publicly, for He always succeeded in turning their own arguments against them in such a

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Mk 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

way as to reveal truth and to make it evident to the people that the rabbinical position was untenable.

5. *With anger.* It is often said that the only anger without sin is the anger against sin. God hates sin, but He loves the sinner. Erring mortals all too often make the mistake of hating the sinner and loving the sin. Anger against wrong as wrong, without evil wish or design on others, may certainly be considered a commendable trait of character.

Grieved. Only Mark records the personal feelings of Jesus. He was “grieved” because the Jewish leaders made use of their high offices and positions to misrepresent the character and requirements of God. No doubt He was also “grieved” because of the results this would have upon these leaders themselves and upon those who followed their misleading ideas. The Greek implies that Jesus’ initial reaction of anger was momentary, but His concern for these benighted children, estranged from their heavenly Father and misconstruing His love for them, continued.

6. *Straightway.* It may perhaps be inferred from this that the Pharisees retired from the synagogue immediately, even before the close of the service.

Herodians. The Herodians were a Jewish political party that favored the house of Herod (see p. 54). Normally the Pharisees hated Herod and all that he stood for (see p. 41). The fact that they now sought the aid of their avowed enemies is evidence that they were beside themselves to find a means of silencing Jesus (see on Matt. 22:16). Perhaps the obdurate Pharisees hoped that Herod would be willing to imprison Jesus as he had John the Baptist a few months earlier (see on Matt. 4:12; Luke 3:20). Some have suggested that this incident may have occurred in the city of Sepphoris, Herod’s capital, some 4 mi. north of Nazareth.

7. *Withdrew.* [*Jesus’ Popularity, Mark 3:7–12=Matt. 12:15–21.* Major comment: Mark.] The Gospel of Mark notes repeatedly that Jesus moved from place to place to escape undue popularity or undue opposition (see chs. 1:45; 7:24; etc.). His withdrawal here was evidently prompted by the desire to avoid further conflict with the religious, and perhaps also the political, authorities. Mark, accordingly, interrupts the series of incidents of conflict in order to comment on the growing popularity of Jesus, which was accompanied proportionately by the increasing hatred and opposition of the Jewish leaders (see on Matt. 12:15).

To the sea. It would seem that the incident of healing the man with a withered hand occurred in an interior city of Galilee, possibly Sepphoris (see on v. 6). The close parallel accounts of the synoptic writers imply, further, that when Jesus left the interior of Galilee He went “to the sea” of Galilee, possibly in the vicinity of the Plain of Gennesaret, to the south of Capernaum. He no doubt found a comparatively secluded stretch of shore away from the cities (see on Luke 5:1).

A great multitude. See on Matt. 5:1. All three synoptic writers mention the great throngs now following Jesus. This situation made apparent the need for a more effective organization, and of more witnesses to devote their entire time to meeting the demands made upon Jesus by the throngs. Two of the three gospel writers, significantly, call attention to the “great multitude” that followed Jesus and clung to Him, immediately prior to the appointment of the Twelve and the Sermon on the Mount (see on Matt. 5:1; Luke 6:17).

8. *Idumæa.* That is, the land of Edom. The word “Idumæa” occurs only here in the NT. Josephus (*Antiquities* xiii. 9. 1 [257, 258]) says that Idumæa was conquered by John

Hyrchanus more than a century before the time of Christ, and its people forced to at least a nominal acceptance of the rites and practices of the Jewish religion (see p. 33).

Tyre and Sidon. See Vol. I, p. 128; Vol. II, pp. 67, 68; see on Gen. 10:15. Only Samaria is conspicuously absent from the enumeration here of the various districts in and near Palestine.

9. A small ship. Or, “a boat.” This detail of the gospel narrative is noted only by Mark. It seems that during the remaining months of the Galilean ministry the small boat for which Christ now made arrangements was always at hand when there was need for it (see chs. 4:35, 36; 6:32; 8:10, 13). Perhaps the boat belonged to Peter (see on Luke 5:3).

Wait on him. Or, “ready for him,” that is, at His disposal whenever He should have need of it.

Multitude. For the third time in as many verses Mark takes note of the throngs that followed Christ wherever He went (see vs. 7, 8).

10. Pressed. The people were not hostile, but eager, each to have his own needs ministered to.

To touch him. Evidently those who were sick or demon-possessed felt that there was magic in this act. See on ch. 5:23, 28.

Plagues. Literally “whips,” or “scourges.” Perhaps these “plagues” were comparable to our epidemics or to other serious diseases.

11. Unclean spirits. See on ch. 1:23.

Saw. In the Greek, the series of verbs, “saw,” “fell down,” and “cried,” all indicate continuing or oft-repeated action.

Fell down. Some have suggested the possibility that the demons thereby wished to give the impression that they recognized Jesus as their leader, thus implying that He was in league with them. If so, Christ’s refusal of their testimony becomes all the more significant.

Son of God. See Additional Note on John 1; see on Luke 1:35; John 1:1–3.

12. Straitly. That is, “strongly,” “intensely,” or “strictly.”

That. Rather, “in order that.”

Not make him known. At this point in the narrative Matthew records in addition a quotation from the OT, prophetic of the ministry of Jesus to the needs of humanity (see on Matt. 12:20).

13. Into a mountain. [*Appointment of the Twelve, Mark 3:13–19=Luke 6:12–16.* Major comment: Mark. See Early Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord.] Evidently into the hilly region to the west of the Lake of Galilee (see on ch. 1:45). Leaving His followers to spend the night at the foot of the mountain (see DA 292), Jesus Himself spent the entire night in prayer at some secluded spot in the hills above them (Luke 6:12). It was now probably the late summer of A.D. 29 (see on Matt. 5:1).

Often Jesus devoted an entire night to prayer (see DA 419). Usually such instances mentioned by the various gospel writers preceded points of decision or crisis in the Saviour’s life or ministry (see on ch. 1:35). He sought meditation and prayer at the beginning of His ministry (see on Matt. 4:1). Prayer likewise marked the opening of His Galilean ministry and immediately preceded His first missionary tour through the towns and villages of Galilee (see on Mark 1:35). The night now spent in prayer preceded the ordination of the Twelve, the Sermon on the Mount, and the beginning of the Second Galilean Tour. Prayer is again specifically mentioned in connection with the great crisis

in Galilee (see Matt. 14:22, 23; cf. John 6:15, 66). The same was true of the Transfiguration, when Jesus presented to three of His disciples the matter of His sufferings and death (Luke 9:28–31). The entire night following the Triumphal Entry He devoted to prayer (see DA 581). The longest recorded prayer of Jesus preceded His entrance to the Garden of Gethsemane (see John 17). And but hours before the crucifixion Jesus offered His most earnest, agonizing prayer in the garden (see Matt. 26:36–44).

Calleth unto him. Apparently there was a somewhat larger group of followers, from which the Twelve were selected.

None of the Twelve was chosen because of perfection, either in character or in ability. Christ selected men who were willing and able to learn, whose characters might be transformed. All had serious defects when called, but these, by His grace, were removed (except in the case of Judas), and in their place Jesus planted the precious seeds of the divine character that germinated, grew to maturity, and later produced the fruit of a Christlike character (Gal. 5:22, 23). Christ takes men where they are, and, if they are willing and submissive, He transforms them into what He would have them be. He appoints men and women to positions of responsibility, not because He considers them fully prepared for the demands these positions make of them, but because, in reading their hearts, He discerns latent abilities that, under divine guidance, may be encouraged and developed to His glory and to the advancement of His kingdom.

Whom he would. The call was not based so much on their desire as upon His. Later He reminded the Twelve, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you” (John 15:16).

They came unto him. When He summoned them to meet Him, at the first light of dawn (see DA 292; MB 4), somewhere on the slope of the hills overlooking the peaceful waters of Galilee.

14. Ordained. Gr. *poieō*, literally, “to make,” that is, “to appoint.” Although it is true that Jesus actually “ordained” the Twelve upon this occasion (see DA 296), this meaning is not implicit in the Greek word *poieō*.

Twelve. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for adding from Luke 6:13, “whom also he named apostles.” No specific reason is given to explain why twelve—no more and no less—were chosen. One immediately thinks, however, of the twelve sons of Jacob, founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. Five of the men now summoned had been disciples of Jesus from the very beginning of His ministry some two years earlier; these were John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael, or Bartholomew (see John 1:40–49). The first three of this group, together with John’s brother James, had accepted the call by the sea a few months prior to this time (see on Luke 5:11). More recently, Matthew had been added to the group.

The appointment and ordination of the Twelve was an event of major significance in the mission of Jesus. John the Baptist had proclaimed the imminent establishment of “the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 3:2), and Jesus had repeated this message during the early part of His ministry (see Matt. 4:17), particularly on the First Galilean Tour, recently completed (MB 2, 3). The kingdom Christ established at His first advent was the kingdom of divine grace (see on Matt. 3:2; 5:2), whose King He was. His subjects were those who received Him and believed on His name (see John 1:12). Their hearts were His domain (see on Luke 17:21).

The appointment of the Twelve may well be regarded as the formal inauguration of the kingdom of grace that Christ had come to establish. The Sermon on the Mount, which followed immediately, may be viewed both as Christ's inaugural address as King of the kingdom of grace, and as the constitution of the new kingdom. Soon after the delivery of this sermon Christ, with the Twelve, set out on the Second Galilean Tour, on which, by precept and example, He demonstrated the nature of the kingdom and the scope of its value to man.

Four lists of the Twelve are given, one each by Matthew (ch. 10:2–4) and Mark, and two by Luke, one in his Gospel (ch. 6:14–16) and one in the Acts (ch. 1:13). These are given below.

The most natural method of grouping the Twelve is to divide them into units of two. When Jesus sent them out on the Third Galilean Tour, He sent them out two by two (see Mark 6:7), brother with brother, and friend with friend (DA 350). The list of Matthew is probably based on this grouping, for after naming the two pairs of brothers, Peter and Andrew, and James and John, he lists the remainder of the Twelve in groups of two, each two

THE TWELVE APOSTLES				
<i>Matt. 10:2-4</i>	<i>Mark 3:16-19</i>	<i>Luke 6:14-16</i>	<i>Acts 1:13</i>	
Simon Peter		Simon Peter	Simon Peter	Peter
Andrew		James	Andrew	James
James } John }	(sons of Zebedee)	John Andrew	James John	John Andrew
Philip		Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew		Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Thomas
Thomas		Matthew	Matthew	Bartholomew
Matthew		Thomas	Thomas	Matthew
James (son of Alphaeus)	James	James	James	
Lebbaeus Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Simon	Simon	
Simon (the "Canaanite")	Simon	Judas	Judas	
Judas Iscariot		Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	-----

joined by the word "and." Thus Philip is coupled with Bartholomew (see [John 1:45](#)), Thomas with Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus) with Thaddaeus, and Simon (the Canaanite) with Judas Iscariot. Furthermore, Matthew's list is given in connection with the sending out of the Twelve.

Another natural grouping appears when each of the four lists is divided into three groups of four each. Although the order of the Twelve varies slightly from list to list, yet the four members of each such group are constant in all four lists (except for the third group in Acts 1:13, where Judas Iscariot is missing).

From a human point of view the twelve men appointed and ordained upon this occasion were poor and illiterate, a band of simple Galilean provincials. The disdain with which the Jewish leaders looked upon Jesus' followers in general led Him, probably a few weeks after this, to relate the parable of the Leaven (see Matt. 13:33; COL 95). The leaven of the transforming grace of God had already begun its work on the hearts of these twelve unpromising, ordinary men, and when they came forth from the period of their

discipleship they were no longer uncouth, uncultured, or unlearned (see on Luke 5:11). Three of them became able writers. John was a profound scholar. So far as is known, none of the Twelve had graduated from the rabbinical schools; apparently none were members of the Jewish aristocracy. But as a result they were devoid of the inveterate prejudices that almost always blinded the scribes and the Pharisees to the claims of Jesus.

Be with him. That is, be His disciples, or learners in His school and assist Him in His work. It is apparent from v. 13 that there were other “disciples” whom He did not, at least upon this occasion, appoint and ordain to be “apostles” (see on v. 13). As “disciples” men came to Christ that they might learn of Him; He sent them forth, as “apostles,” to teach others. The word “apostle” is derived from the Gr. *apostolos*, which comes from the two words *apo*, “from,” and *stellō*, “to dispatch,” or “to send.” An “apostle” is thus, literally, “one sent forth” (see on Matt. 10:2). The designation “apostles” henceforth distinguished the Twelve from “disciples” in general, not that the Twelve ceased to be disciples but that they became apostles as well.

In a somewhat wider sense Paul often referred to himself as an “apostle” (1 Cor. 4:9; Gal. 1:1; etc.; cf. Heb. 3:1). It is apparent that Paul based his claim to apostleship, however, on the fact that Christ had appeared to him (see 1 Cor. 15:8) and instructed him (see Gal. 1:11, 12). He nevertheless spoke of himself both as “the least of the apostles” (1 Cor. 15:9), and again as being “not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles” (2 Cor. 11:5). Elsewhere he reconciles these two seemingly exclusive thoughts (see 2 Cor. 12:11). In a still wider sense such men as Barnabas, Timothy, and Silas were also called apostles (see Acts 14:14; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:6). Possibly the term was also applied to any delegate or messenger sent forth by any Christian church as its representative (2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25).

To preach. Here and in v. 15 the two major aspects of Christ’s personal ministry are given as objectives of the ministry of the Twelve also: preaching, for the cure of the soul; and healing, for the cure of the body. Jesus Himself devoted more time to ministering to the physical needs of humanity than to preaching, and the Twelve doubtless followed His example.

15. Power. Gr. *exousia*, “authority” (see on Luke 1:35).

Cast out devils. To be able to relieve men of demon possession, generally considered incurable, implied power over lesser afflictions. See Additional Note on Chapter 1.

16. Peter. Peter appears first all in all four NT lists of the Twelve (see p. 593). He often took upon himself the role of spokesman for the entire group (Matt. 14:28; 16:16; 17:24; 26:35; etc.). Shortly after the baptism of Jesus, Andrew brought his brother Peter to Jesus, the first Christian convert resulting from what might be called a layman’s efforts (see John 1:40–42). Peter had, at that time, responded to the invitation to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, and had associated himself intermittently with the Lord in His ministry. Nearly two years later, probably in the late spring or early summer of A.D. 29 (see on Matt. 4:12), Christ called him to permanent discipleship, together with his brother Andrew and his business partners James and John (see Luke 5:1–11; see on v. 7).

Possibly Peter, by common consent, acted as the manager of the fishing business he conducted in partnership with the others. At any rate his ardor, eagerness, earnestness, courage, loyalty, vigor, and organizing ability no doubt marked him for leadership among the disciples from the very beginning. Peter was pre-eminently a man of action; his

enthusiastic disposition was his strongest personal character trait. He was a man of pronounced extremes, and his strong personality was the source of marked virtues and serious defects. In him, diverse and contradictory traits of character existed side by side. He seems always to have been eager, ardent, warmhearted, generous, bold, daring, and courageous, but too often impulsive, inconsistent, unstable, rash, undependable, boastful, overconfident, and even reckless. In a moment of crisis he was likely to be weak, cowardly, and vacillating; and no one could predict which side of his character and personality would prevail at any given time.

Peter was a native of Bethsaida Julias (see John 1:44), on the northeastern shore of the Lake of Galilee, opposite Capernaum, to which city he apparently later moved (see on Mark 1:29). Peter and his fishing partners, Andrew, James, and John, all seem to have been disciples of John the Baptist (see John 1:35–42; DA 138).

17. James. Gr. *Iakōbos*, from the Heb. *Ya‘aqob*, the name of the patriarch Jacob (see on Gen 25:26, 27). The English form of the name, “James,” is a modified form derived from the Latin through the French. James is usually mentioned before his brother John, when the two are referred to together, indicating that John was the younger of the two (cf. DA 292). James was undoubtedly the first of the Twelve to suffer a martyr’s death, in approximately A.D. 44 (see on Acts 12:1, 2), whereas his brother John was the last of the Twelve to die, in approximately A.D. 96. The fact that James was deemed important enough to be selected by Herod Agrippa for early martyrdom implies that he was one of the prominent leaders of the church in Jerusalem. The NT record presents James as at first a somewhat selfish, ambitious, and outspoken man (see Mark 10:35–41), but later as a quiet and capable leader. Many have identified the mother of James and John, and the wife of Zebedee, as Salome (cf. Mark 15:40; Matt. 27:56). There is a further possibility, though rather remote, that Salome is to be identified as the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, if four women are mentioned in John 19:25 rather than three (see on John 19:25).

John. John was apparently a man of deep spiritual insight, which developed as he beheld in Jesus the One altogether lovely. John not only loved his Master; he was “that disciple whom Jesus loved” (see John 20:2; 21:7, 20). By nature proud, self-assertive, ambitious of honor, impetuous, resentful under injury, and eager to take revenge (see Mark 10:35–41; AA 540, 541), John yielded himself more completely than any of the others to the transforming power of the perfect life of Jesus, and came to reflect the Saviour’s likeness more fully than did his fellow disciples. As James was the first of the Twelve to give his life a martyr for the gospel, so John was last to die. It was not without reason that Jesus named James and John “sons of thunder” (Mark 3:17; see on Luke 9:54). According to early Christian tradition John served as pastor of the church at Ephesus and supervisor of the churches throughout the Roman province of Asia during the closing years of his life.

Boanerges. Probably a transliteration from an Aramaic expression meaning “sons of tumult,” or “sons of wrath”—freely translated “sons of thunder.” The vehement temperament, the fiery temper, of James and John was on occasion manifested openly (see Luke 9:49, 52–56).

18. Andrew. Gr. *Andreas*, meaning “manly,” a Greek name from *anēr*, “a man.” Though one of the earliest followers of Jesus (see John 1:35–40), Andrew did not become one of the inner circle (DA 292) and is seldom mentioned in the gospel narrative. Most of what we know of him comes from John (see chs. 1:40, 41, 44; 6:8; 12:22). Matthew and

Luke list Andrew as the second of the Twelve disciples, probably to associate him with his brother Peter. For Andrew's family background see on Mark 3:16. Andrew appears to have been a diligent worker, though perhaps not so gifted in qualities of leadership as his brother. According to tradition he was martyred in Greece on a cross in the shape of the letter X—as a result of which a cross shaped thus is commonly known as St. Andrew's cross.

Philip. Gr. *Philippos*, “fond of horses,” like “Andrew,” a genuine Greek name. Philip was a native of Bethsaida Julias (see John 1:44), near the northern end of the Lake of Galilee. Most of what we know about Philip before Christ's ascension comes to us through the record of the Gospel of John (see chs. 1:43–48; 6:5–7; 12:21, 22; 14:8, 9).

He was the first to whom Jesus said, “Follow me” (John 1:43). He is characterized as a sincere seeker for truth, but apparently slower than some of the others to recognize Jesus as the Messiah and to appreciate the significance of His mission to earth (see John 6:7; 14:8, 9). He seems to have been at times uncertain as to what course of action to take (see John 12:21, 22). Nevertheless he was earnest, and when he had found the Messiah, immediately began bringing others to Him (see John 1:45).

Bartholomew. Literally, “son of Talmai” (cf. Num. 13:22; 2 Sam. 3:3; 13:37). Nathanael was probably his own personal name. The Synoptic Gospels make no mention of Nathanael, and the Gospel of John says nothing of Bartholomew. John mentions Nathanael, together with others of the Twelve, in a setting where it seems that none but disciples of the inner circle of twelve were present (see ch. 21:2). Thus there is no valid reason for doubting that the two names Bartholomew and Nathanael refer to the same person. It was Philip who introduced his friend Nathanael to Jesus (see John 1:45); apparently the two men were close friends (cf. DA 293).

Matthew. Mark and Luke refer to Matthew as Levi (see on Mark 2:14). It seems improbable that Alphaeus the father of Matthew is to be identified with Alphaeus who was the father of James. The two disciples are never associated together in the Gospels as if they were brothers, as are Peter with Andrew and James with John. Matthew proved to be a capable worker. According to tradition he devoted his energies, after the resurrection, largely to work for his fellow countrymen, and may have labored in Ethiopia or in the region about the Black Sea.

Thomas. Also called Didymus (see John 11:16; 20:24; 21:2). Both names mean “twin.” Tradition has it that his given name was Judas (a common Hebrew name). All that is known of Thomas is recorded in the Gospel of John (see chs. 11:16; 14:5; 20:24–29; 21:2). Although he showed himself to be doubting and selfish at times (see John 20:24, 25), yet on other occasions he was brave and loyal (see ch. 11:16). He is said to have labored in Parthia and Persia. A less certain tradition has Thomas in India and China.

In southern India there is a group of indigenous Christians who have been known for centuries as Thomas Christians. They have in their possession a version of the gospel story said to have been handed down to them by the apostle Thomas. They claim that Thomas suffered martyrdom on an eminence known as St. Thomas' Mount, near Madras. There was also a Jewish missionary by the name of Thomas who labored in China, and whose picture has been preserved in stone, together with an inscription that, freely translated, reads: “Thomas came and labored with singleness of heart and great zeal. If all the good he did were to be recorded, one would have to dip his pen in Tungting Lake [a

large lake in China] until the lake was dried up [in order to have sufficient water to make the necessary amount of ink].” This interesting picture of Thomas has distinctly Jewish features, but probably is not that of Thomas the apostle.

James. Distinguished from James the son of Zebedee as James the son of Alphaeus. There seems to be good reason to believe him to be the James mentioned in Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40; 16:1; Luke 24:10. The expression “James the less,” or literally, “James the little” (Mark 15:40), probably refers to him as such in the sense of “James the younger” (see on Ps. 115:13), or possibly the expression was used because he was of short stature.

Some have attempted to identify James the son of Alphaeus with James the brother of our Lord (see Matt. 13:55), but this suggestion is so extremely improbable as to be almost unworthy of notice. James the disciple was a follower of Christ at least from the time when the Twelve were appointed, about the summer of A.D. But as late as six months before the crucifixion the brothers of Jesus are said not to have believed in Him (see John 7:5). Even the setting of Matt. 13:55 and Mark 6:3 implies that the incident there referred to occurred about the time of the Third Galilean Tour, certainly after the selection of the Twelve. See on Acts 12:17.

Thaddæus. Identified by Matthew (see ch. 10:3) as Lebbeaus. An ancient tradition, against which no evidence has been offered, equates Thaddæus with Judas the son of James (see Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). It is quite clear from other examples that this Judas was not the brother but the son of a man named James, although the Greek text of Luke 6:16 reads simply “Judas of James” Almost certainly this James, the father of Thaddæus or Judas, is not to be identified with any other James of the NT, for the name was very common (see on Mark 3:17). Where John (see ch. 14:22) refers to this Judas he clearly distinguishes him from Judas Iscariot. Thaddæus does not appear as prominently in the NT records as do most of the other apostles.

Simon. Called “the Canaanite” to distinguish him from Simon Peter. Concerning the meaning and derivation of the name Simon see on v. 16. The designation “Canaanite” does not necessarily mark Simon as descended from one of the Canaanite nations that inhabited the land of Palestine prior to the coming of the Hebrews (see on Gen. 10:6). Many other ancient manuscripts refer to him as “the Cananaean,” which means either an inhabitant of the city of Cana, or, more likely, a member of a Jewish patriotic party also known as the Zealots (see Luke 6:15; p. 54; cf. DA 96).

19. Judas Iscariot. The NT name Judas is equivalent to the OT Judah (see on Gen. 29:35; Matt. 1:2). Many explanations have been given of the name Iscariot, the most probable of which is that it is from the Hebrew *ish Qeriyyoth*, meaning “man of Kerioth,” a village of southern Judea near Idumaea (see Joshua 15:25; see on Mark 3:8). If this identification of the name Iscariot be correct, Judas was probably the only one of the Twelve not a native of Galilee. He was the son of a man named Simon (see on John 6:71.)

Jesus had not summoned Judas to join the group of disciples from which He selected the Twelve (see on Mark 3:13), but Judas intruded among them and asked for a place. Judas doubtless believed Jesus to be the Messiah—like the other disciples, in terms of the popular Jewish conception of a political deliverer from the yoke of Rome—and desired membership in the inner circle of disciples in order to secure a high position in the “kingdom” soon to be established. Perhaps he volunteered for the position of treasurer, hoping for appointment to that office in the new kingdom. However, Jesus realized from

the very first that Judas was lacking in those basic traits that would qualify him to become an apostle of the kingdom that was to be established.

In spite of all the evil latent in the heart of Judas, he was in many respects more promising than the others Jesus called. When admitted to membership with the Twelve, Judas was not beyond hope. The nurture and development of certain desirable traits of character, together with the elimination of the evil traits, might have made of him an acceptable worker in the cause of the kingdom. But, unlike John (see on v. 17), Judas steeled his heart against the precepts and example of Jesus. Nevertheless, Jesus gave him every encouragement and every opportunity to develop a heavenly character. The “bruised reed” of Judas’ character, the “smoking flax” of good intentions, Jesus would not break or quench (see on Matt. 12:20).

Betrayed him. See on Luke 6:16.

Went into an house. Or, “went home,” probably to the home of Peter in Capernaum (see on ch. 1:29). Some have observed that the Gospel of Mark deals primarily with what Jesus did, rather than with His teachings. Unlike Matthew, who devotes three chapters to the Sermon on the Mount, Mark omits it entirely, not even mentioning the fact that following the ordination of the Twelve Jesus delivered that address (see on Matt. 5:1). Toward the close of the day Jesus and His disciples no doubt returned to Capernaum.

20. Multitude cometh together. [*A Blind and Dumb Demoniac; The Unpardonable Sin, Mark 3:20–30=Matt. 12:22–45=Luke 11:14–32. Major comment: Matthew.*] Mark does not mention the healing of the blind and dumb demoniac, but records only the accusation of the scribes that Jesus cast out devils by the power of the prince of devils, and His reply to them (see v. 22; DA 321). Concerning the place of this incident in the chronological sequence, and the interrelationship of the record of the incident in the various Gospels, see on Matt. 12:22. It should be noted that Mark places ch. 3:20–35 in chronological sequence, between the choice of the Twelve (ch. 3:14–19) and the Sermon by the Sea (ch. 4).

21. His friends. Gr. *hoi par’ autou*, literally, “those from beside Him.” Though this expression may indicate nothing more than that the persons mentioned were close associates of Jesus, there is evidence from the ancient Greek papyri that the expression may be used to refer to relatives. Thus it is probable that the statement of v. 21 anticipates the incident of vs. 31–35.

Beside himself. That is, “mentally unbalanced.” The close similarity between this fear on the part of Jesus’ “friends” and the charge brought by the scribes that Jesus was in league with the devil (v. 22) may account for the insertion of v. 21 as an introduction to the charge that Jesus acted as an agent of Beelzebub (vs. 22–30).

22. Scribes. See p. 55.

Came down from Jerusalem. See Luke 5:17. These were probably some of the spies who dogged the footsteps of Jesus throughout His Galilean ministry, acting under orders from the Sanhedrin (see on Mark 2:6).

He hath Beelzebub. See on Matt. 12:24.

29. Blaspheme. See on Matt. 12:31.

Eternal damnation. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “eternal sin.”

31. His brethren and his mother. [*Visit of Jesus’ Mother and Brothers, Mark 3:31–35=Matt. 12:46–50=Luke 8:19–21. Major comment: Matthew.*] Concerning the

chronological position of this incident, and the interrelationship of the various synoptic accounts of it, see on Matt. 12:22, 46.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–5DA 286
8 DA 298; MB 4
13, 14 AA 18; DA 290
13–19DA 290–297
14, 15 CH 557
17 AA 540; DA 295; Ed 87
20–35DA 321–327
21 DA 321
25 5T 244

CHAPTER 4

1 *The parable of the sower, 14 and the meaning thereof.* 21 *We must communicate the light of our knowledge to others.* 26 *The parable of the seed growing secretly, 30 and of the mustard seed.* 35 *Christ stilleth the tempest on the sea.*

1. By the sea side. [*Sermon by the Sea, Mark 4:1–34=Matt. 13:1–53=Luke 8:4–18.* Major comment: Matthew. On parables see pp. 203-207.]

2. His doctrine. Literally, “His teaching.”

13. How then will ye know? The parable of the Sower, the Seed, and the Soils was the simplest of parables. Its meaning should have been clear to the disciples. If they experienced difficulty with this one, what would they do with the others?

Lusts. From the Gr. *epithumia*, “ardent desire,” “yearning,” or “longing.” The Greek of itself does not have the connotation of our word “lust.” It was “with desire [Gr. *epithumia*]” that Jesus desired to celebrate the last Passover with the Twelve (see Luke 22:15). Desire is wrong only when it is directed toward things that are evil. Here it is worldly interests such as the desire for riches that make the “desire” evil.

21. Candle. Gr. *luchnos*, “a lamp.” Christ repeated the parable about the candle in different forms at various times, to teach various truths. When He gave it as part of the Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. 5:14–16), He used it to illustrate the responsibility of Christian believers to be an example to the world, to let their individual light shine. Here it is an illustration of the light of truth revealed in His own teachings, particularly through the use of parables. In Luke 11:33–36 it illustrates the individual’s perception and reception of truth.

Bushel. Gr. *modios*. Not a U.S bushel, but .99 peck, or 8.72 l. (see p. 50). “The candle,” “the bushel,” and “the bed” were articles of equipment to be found in every home, thus making the illustration quite graphic.

Candlestick. Literally, “lampstand” (see on Matt. 5:15).

22. Nothing hid. See on Luke 8:17.

23. Ears to hear. See on Matt. 11:15.

24. What ye hear. Luke reads, “how ye hear” (ch. 8:18). There are some things the Christian had best not hear or see; there are other things that it is wise for him to “hear.”

With what measure. See on Matt. 7:2.

26. The kingdom of God. See on Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:2; Luke 4:19.

Cast seed. Only Mark records the parable of the Growing Seed. It illustrates the same truth spoken to Nicodemus in regard to the operation of the Holy Spirit (see John 3:8). In this parable Christ says that if the seed of the kingdom is but given a chance in the life, it will produce its harvest of good. Men may not be able to explain how the process of Christian growth and character transformation takes place, but it goes forward nevertheless.

27. Sleep, and rise. Having planted the seed, the farmer goes about other business. But the process of growth goes forward regardless of his presence or absence, whether he sleeps or wakes. He may cultivate and irrigate the seed as it grows to maturity, but he cannot make it grow.

28. The earth. The plant grows out of the earth and the earth contributes to its growth, but it is the plant itself that produces fruit.

Of herself. Gr. *automatē*, “moved by one’s own impulse”; from which is derived our word “automatic.”

Then the ear. That is, the ear of grain when it begins to form, in contrast with the ear at maturity.

Corn. Rather, “grain” (see on Lev. 2:14).

29. Is brought forth. That is, when the grain is ripe.

He putteth in. Gr. *apostellō*, “to send forth,” from which comes our word “apostle,” meaning “one who is sent forth” (see on ch. 3:14). The work of the apostles is elsewhere compared to that of reapers (see John 4:35–38).

Harvest. See on Matt. 3:12; 13:30.

30. Whereunto. See on Matt. 13:3.

Kingdom of God. See on Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:2; Luke 4:19.

Shall we compare it? Christ takes His hearers into consultation, as it were. His audience was invited to participate in the quest for truth.

31. Mustard seed. See on Matt. 13:31, 32.

33. Many such parables. Mark probably refers only to the parables spoken upon this occasion, though the same would no doubt be true of all the parables of Christ.

As they were able. Christ did not speak in parables in order to conceal truth, but in order to reveal it.

34. Without a parable. Heretofore Christ had made sparing use of parables in His teaching. The Sermon by the Sea marks the beginning of His parable teaching as a regular method of proclaiming the gospel (see pp. 203, 204).

35. Same day. [*The Storm on the Lake, Mark 4:35–41* = *Matt. 8:18, 23–27* = *Luke 8:22–25*. Major comment: Matthew.] That “day” had been an eventful one in the life of Jesus (see on Matt. 8:18). In Mark’s account of the storm on the lake he includes certain dramatic details of the incident not mentioned by either Matthew or Luke.

36. Other little ships. These were filled with people who still followed Jesus eagerly (cf. DA 334).

38. A pillow. Probably this was a regular part of the boat’s equipment, being a coarse leather cushion for the steersman, who sat at the stern of the boat.

Master. Literally, “Teacher.”

Carest thou not? Their appeal reflects impatience bordering almost on despair.

39. Peace. Literally, “be silent.”

Be still. Literally, “be muzzled.” The elements were not only to become silent but to remain so. Some have suggested that Jesus here rebuked the elements as if they were raging monsters.

41. They feared exceedingly. Literally, “they feared a great fear,” or more freely, “they were filled with awe.”

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–20COL 33–61

14 COL 37, 41

19 COL 51, 53; 1T 352

21 5T 84, 588; 6T 145; 8T 76

24 5T 694

26–28CT 140–144; Ed 104–107

26–29COL 62–69; CT 142; 6T 186

28 CG 27, 58; COL 67, 81, 82; CT 125, 252; DA 367; Ed 106; Ev 579; LS 298; MM 7; SC 67; TM 243, 506; 6T 187; 8T 327

29 COL 69; CT 144

30 AA 12

30–32COL 76–79

35–41DA 333–337

36–38DA 334

39–41DA 335

CHAPTER 5

1 *Christ delivering the possessed of the legion of devils, 13 they enter into the swine. 25 He healeth the woman of the bloody issue, 35 and raiseth from death Jairus' daughter.*

1. The other side. [*The Demoniacs of Gadara, Mark 5:1–20=Matt. 8:28 to 9:1=Luke 8:26–39.* Major comment: Mark. See Middle Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] Of the three accounts of this miracle that of Mark is most graphic, and that of Matthew the briefest. “The other side” of the Lake of Galilee refers to the eastern shore, in the region of the Decapolis (see p. 46; see on Matt. 4:25). The preceding day Jesus had delivered the Sermon by the Sea, which consisted largely of parables (see Matt. 13), somewhere along the shore of Galilee bordering on the Plain of Gennesaret (see on Matt. 13:1). The distance across the lake at this point was about 7 mi. (11 km.). It was upon this crossing that Jesus had stilled the storm (see on Matt. 8:18). His purpose in crossing to the less densely populated eastern shore at this time was to enjoy a brief respite from the throngs of people who were now pressing upon Him to the extent that He often had little or no time even to eat and sleep (see Mark 3:20).

Gadarenes. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading Gerasenes, though important evidence may also be cited for Gergesenes and Gadarenes. In Matt. 8:28 evidence favors Gadarenes, but may also be cited for Gergesenes and Gerasenes. In Luke 8:26 evidence favors Gerasenes, but may also be cited for Gergesenes and Gadarenes. The efforts of copyists and editors to harmonize the names in the three accounts are apparent. The consensus of evidence favors the reading Gerasenes, with evidence for each of the other two.

Though conclusive evidence is not now available, it is generally thought that Christ's encounter with the Gadarene demoniacs occurred a short distance below what is now the village of *Kursī*, which is usually identified with the ancient Gergesa. Gadara was a city

about 12 mi. (19 km.) to the south of this place, about 6 mi. (c. 10 km.) from the southern tip of the Lake of Galilee. It was at one time the capital of Decapolis (see on Matt. 4:25; Mark 5:20). Probably it was at this time the chief city of the district, and possibly gave the district its name. The city of Gerasa, 35 mi. (56 km.) to the southeast of the Lake of Galilee, can hardly be the place referred to in the account of this miracle. It is not impossible that there was a village by the same name not far from Gergesa, or that both Gerasa and Gergesa refer to the same village, now called *Kursī*.

2. Out of the ship. A short distance to the south of the village of *Kursī* (see on v. 1) is a steep bluff that descends abruptly to a narrow shore (see on v. 13). Jesus and the disciples may well have disembarked to the south of this bluff, where the beach widens and the hills recede from the lake.

Tombs. The limestone hills in the region about *Kursī* abound in caverns and rock-hewn chambers. Dug out of the comparatively soft limestone, chambers such as these were commonly used as burial places in ancient Palestine.

A man. Matthew speaks of two men (ch. 8:28). Apparently, however, one was outstandingly fierce. Similarly, Matthew speaks of two blind men at Jericho (ch. 20:30), where Mark (ch. 10:46) and Luke (ch. 18:35) speak of but one, probably for some similar reason. It is worthy of note that Matthew, no doubt an eyewitness to both events, mentions two men in each instance. Concerning differences between the various gospel accounts of the same incident see Additional Notes on Matthew 3, Note 2. Compare on Mark 10:46; Luke 5:2; 7:3; Additional Note on Luke 7.

An unclean spirit. Concerning the nature of demon possession see Additional Note on Chapter 1.

3. Tombs. See on v. 2. According to Levitical law a corpse was unclean (see on Lev. 21:2), and this uncleanness would attach also to the place of burial. Obviously such considerations were of no concern to the demoniacs.

No man could bind him. Matthew's statement that no one could pass "that way" (ch. 8:28) implies that the haunt of these demon-possessed men was not far from a thoroughfare, probably one leading along the eastern shore of the lake (cf. DA 338).

Chains. Gr. *halusis*, "a chain," or "a bond," often used specifically to designate a manacle, or handcuff.

4. Fetters. Gr. *pedē*, "a shackle for the feet," from a word meaning "foot," or "instep." "Fetters" is from the Anglo-Saxon "feter," a device designed for the feet.

5. Cutting himself. In fury he often gashed his body, and was probably a mass of scars and sores.

6. When he saw Jesus. He and his companion may have been on the lower slopes of the hill that dropped off precipitously into the sea, and thus they may have observed the boats approaching.

He ran. Probably with the intention of attacking Jesus and those who accompanied Him, no doubt screaming wildly while coming down the beach.

Worshipped him. By the time the demoniacs came to the place where Jesus stood, the disciples had fled in terror, and the Saviour was alone with the two demon-possessed men (DA 337). Somehow they seemed to perceive dimly that here was a Friend, not a foe (see DA 337, 338), and they prostrated themselves on the ground at Jesus' feet. His very

presence often seemed to impress deeply even His worst enemies (see Matt. 21:12, 13; John 2:15).

7. To do with thee. The challenge to Jesus' authority (see ch. 1:27; see on ch. 2:10) really meant, "What right have you to interfere with me?" See on John 2:4.

Son. See Luke 1:35; John 1:1–3.

Most high God. See Acts 16:17; see on Gen. 14:18, 22. It would seem that the evil spirits were speaking directly through one of the demoniacs of Gadara to Christ, for Jesus addresses the "unclean spirit" rather than the man himself (see Mark 5:8). Accordingly, the recognition of Jesus as the "Son of the most high God" represents knowledge the spirits possessed, not the demoniacs.

I adjure. Gr. *horkizō*, "to administer an oath to." The wording of Luke's account is less graphic, "I beseech" (ch. 8:28).

Torment. Gr. *basanizō*, originally meaning "to test [metals] by the touchstone." In the NT *basanizō* is used in the sense of inflicting pain or torture.

8. He said. Rather, "He was saying." As Jesus was in the very process of commanding the spirit to come out of the man, the spirit startlingly interrupted and challenged Him.

9. What is thy name? Why Christ asked the name of the spirit possessing the man, or rather the spokesman for the legion of spirits, is not clear. It has been suggested that this was for the benefit of the disciples, in order that they might appreciate more fully the magnitude of the miracle, and better realize the nature and power of the forces against which they must contend.

Legion. A Roman army division, which, at full strength, consisted of approximately 6,000 footmen and 700 horsemen, or a total of about 6,700. Commonly, however, as with modern armies, the legion was not maintained at full strength. Though the demon's use of the name Legion may be taken literally, there is no way of determining the precise number. The expression is best understood in the general sense that there were many demons (see Luke 8:30).

10. Besought him much. The defiant demon now took the attitude of a suppliant begging Jesus for mercy. Possibly he was fearful for his life (see on ch. 1:24).

Out of the country. Luke reads instead, "out into the deep" (ch. 8:31). The Greek word translated "deep" is *abussos* (see on Rev. 20:1). In the LXX of Gen. 1:2 and 7:11 *abussos* stands for the Heb. *tehom*, translated into English as "deep" (see on Gen. 1:2). In the LXX of Job 28:14 it stands for "sea," and in Deut. 8:7 and Ps. 71:20 for the "depths" of the earth. In Rom. 10:7 "deep," *abussos*, is used to describe the place of "the dead," particularly with reference to Christ's death. In Rev. 9:2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3 *abussos* is translated "bottomless pit." Used as an adjective in classical Greek, the word means "bottomless," "boundless." When used with reference to intelligent beings, *abussos* seems to imply isolation from other beings and the inability to escape from the situation—as of a man in death or confined alone in a dungeon.

11. Nigh unto the mountains. That is, on the hillside, at some distance from where Christ and the demoniacs stood on the beach (see Matt. 8:30). Whenever in that region the swineherds were undoubtedly always on the alert for the demon-possessed men, and

thus saw them as they raced toward Christ, heard their unearthly shrieks, and witnessed the glorious transformation in their appearance that had occurred.

Swine. Although some Jews raised swine for the sake of gain, there is no evidence that the owners of this particular herd of swine were Jews. Certainly, however, they were absorbed in business and profit, oblivious of spiritual things.

12. The devils besought. See on v. 10.

Send us. It was Satan's purpose to turn the people of this region against the Saviour by making it appear that He was responsible for the destruction of their property. The immediate result seemed to justify the devil's evil expectations. But the ministry of the transformed men who previously had been known throughout the district as demoniacs, together with news of the herd of swine that perished in the sea to confirm their story, served as nothing else could possibly have done to turn the people of the region to Jesus (see on vs. 19, 20).

13. Gave them leave. Compare the experience of Job (Job 1:12; 2:6); the proposal that brought injury to Job was made by the devil, and God simply consented to it, yet overruled all for the benefit and encouragement of Christians down through the ages.

Down a steep place. Literally, "down the precipice." A short distance south of the village of *Kursī*, thought to be the ancient Gergesa (see on v. 1), there is a steep bluff, where the hills come down close to the water's edge, the only place on the entire coast where this is true. The declivity is so steep that it might be called a cliff, though not of the overhanging type. At the foot of this precipice the beach is so narrow that the swine could not possibly have halted their headlong race.

Choked. Gr. *pnigō*, "to choke," or "to strangle"; used here in the sense of "to be drowned."

14. In the country. Literally, "in the farmlands," as contrasted with "country," meaning the entire region (see v. 10). On their way to the village of Gergesa, probably a short distance to the north of the precipice (see on v. 13), the swineherds might be expected to announce to all they met what had happened.

15. Sitting. Evidently composed, relaxed, and at rest—a great contrast to the excited state in which they had come to Jesus shortly before.

Clothed. In harmony with the principle commonly referred to as "the economy of miracle," which simply means that God usually does not perform miracles where the result can be secured by more natural means, and usually does not do Himself what may be accomplished by human effort, it is improbable that the clothing these men now wore had been provided miraculously. It is more likely that the disciples either offered or were invited to share their clothing with the men.

In his right mind. In the instances of demon possession recorded in the NT the mind of the person afflicted had become deranged (see Additional Note on Mark 1).

They were afraid. Thoughts of the loss of the swine tended, for the time being, to dominate the thinking of most of the people of that region. They no doubt wondered what the next demonstration of supernatural power might produce, and apparently they feared that greater material loss might result.

16. They that saw it. Probably both the swineherds, who had already told their version of the incident (see v. 14), and the disciples. The latter also related the experience of the stilling of the storm on the lake the previous night, but their words fell on deaf ears (see DA 339).

17. Pray him. Rather, “entreat Him,” or “beseech Him.”

To depart. Their choice was made on the basis of material considerations. They chose to forgo any possible blessings such as had come to the healed demoniacs, lest they suffer further loss of property. In harmony with the counsel He Himself was soon to give to the Twelve as He sent them forth to preach and heal (see Matt. 10:14, 23), Jesus made no protest, but simply turned to leave. How many today follow the pathetic example of the people of Gadara, fearful that the Saviour’s presence will thwart their own plans.

Coasts. Gr. *horia*, “boundaries,” “borders,” or “limits.” As used here, *horia* does not refer to the shores of the lakes as may appear from the translation “coasts.”

18. When. As Jesus was in the act of entering the boat, the healed man was beseeching Him.

That had been possessed. The brief time the two men had spent had spent with Jesus must have been to them the greatest thrill of their lives. As they saw Him getting into the boat to depart they realized that they were about to be separated from the One who had restored them to health of mind. Perhaps, for the moment, they feared that His absence might mean the return of the demons, which they no doubt dreaded worse than death itself. In any event, they wished to remain with Jesus.

Prayed. See on v. 17.

19. Suffered him not. Jesus did what was best for all concerned. The inhabitants of Decapolis needed the ministry of these men. Additionally, there was the probability that they, as Gentiles (see on Matt. 4:25; cf. DA 339), would have become a hindrance to Jesus’ work in Galilee.

To thy friends. Literally, “to those of you,” that is, to his own relatives.

Tell them. The reasons that so often led Jesus to warn those who had been recipients of His miracles not to circulate the report of what had been done for them (see on ch. 1:44, 45), did not apply to the situation in Decapolis. There were probably few scribes and Pharisees in Decapolis to give out a false report of Jesus’ activities. Furthermore, Jesus was not planning to remain in the region, and there would be no popular uprising in His favor that might tend to hinder His work. Also, a miracle such as this would probably create here no false hopes concerning the Messiah (see on Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:2).

20. Publish. Gr. *kērussō*, literally, “to herald”; hence, “to proclaim.” In the brief hour or so during which Jesus had remained with these two men great things had happened. They had an inspiring story to tell, and in the interval before the people came out from the city Jesus no doubt instructed them in the fundamental truths of the gospel story. As they proclaimed their message throughout the region of Decapolis, what they said was confirmed by the report of the swineherds, which must have spread throughout the vicinity of Gergesa (see on v. 1) with lightning speed. Men everywhere must have listened with eager interest when these, for whose benefit the miracle had been performed, came with the gospel story. Their own former reputation as madmen must also have been widely known (see Matt. 8:28).

Decapolis. See p. 46. The various cities of the Decapolis had been Hellenistic since the time of Alexander the Great, but were subdued by the Jews under the Maccabees. They were liberated from Jewish rule by the Roman general Pompey, who distributed the land among veterans of his army.

All men did marvel. As the two men, now under the control of the Spirit of God, told their story, people everywhere listened in surprise and astonishment. The results of their

ministry should bring great encouragement to those who may feel that their own ability and training are not sufficient to enable them to bear effective witness for Christ. Those who sincerely love Christ, and whose lives have been transformed by His power, need simply to tell others “how great things the Lord hath done” for them (v. 19), and men will be won to Christ.

This probably took place late in the autumn of A.D. 29 (see on Luke 8:1). When Jesus returned to Decapolis some nine or ten months later (see on Matt. 15:32), thousands flocked to see and hear Him (cf. DA 340, 341). Those who came out to hear Jesus upon that later occasion were almost entirely Gentiles.

21. Passed over again. [*The Invalid Woman; Jairus' Daughter, Mark 5:21–43=Matt. 9:18–26=Luke 8:40–56.* Major comment: Mark. See Middle Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] The healing of the invalid woman and the raising of the daughter of Jairus occurred soon after the healing of the two demoniacs (see on Matt. 8:18; 12:22; 13:1). The crossing of the lake here referred to was from the vicinity of Gergesa, on the eastern shore (see on Mark 5:1), to Capernaum, a distance of 5 or 6 mi. in a northwesterly direction.

Much people gathered. As they did everywhere Jesus went during this period of His ministry (see chs. 3:7, 20, 32; 4:1).

Nigh unto the sea. Apparently a crowd began to gather on the shore as soon as the people recognized Jesus approaching in one of the boats. For a time He remained near where He had landed, teaching and healing, as His custom was when the people gathered about Him. Then, together with some of His disciples, Jesus went to the home of Levi Matthew to attend the feast there given in His honor (see on ch. 2:15–17). It was here that Jairus found Jesus (see Matt. 9:10, 14, 18; DA 342).

22. One of the rulers. The ruler of a synagogue was the one in charge of public worship (see p. 56). Whether Mark means that Jairus was one of several rulers of this particular synagogue, or one of a class known by that name, one to each synagogue, is not certain.

Jairus. Probably derived from the Heb. *Ya'ir*, the OT Jair (see Num. 32:41).

Fell at his feet. As before a prince or someone of high authority (see on Esther 3:2; cf. on Matt. 2:11; 8:2). If he might thereby save his only daughter, this proud rabbi was willing to humble himself even before Jesus, despised and hated by most men of his class.

23. Besought. Or, “entreated” (see on v. 17).

Little daughter. Of the three Gospels recording this incident only Mark gives the precise age of the girl (see v. 42), and hence he uses here the diminutive form of the word “daughter.”

Point of death. The disease, unidentified by any the gospel writers, was in its final stage. Death was certain unless Jesus would intervene.

I pray thee. These words do not appear in the Greek.

Lay thy hands. The personal touch of Jesus seems to have been a mark of His personal interest in each sufferer (see on ch. 1:31).

She shall live. There was no doubt in the father's mind that Jesus had the power to restore his little daughter to health. Unquestionably there were scores, or even hundreds, of persons in and about Capernaum whose lives bore testimony to Jesus' power. Among

these were the son of the nobleman (John 4:46–54) and the servant of the centurion (Luke 7:1–10).

24. Thronged. Gr. *sunthilibō*, “to press together,” or “to press on all sides.” In his parallel account, Luke uses a more graphic word, *sunpnigō*, “to throttle,” or “to choke.” On the way to the home of Jairus, Jesus was surrounded by a crowd so thick that His progress was, literally, “choked.” He could hardly move.

25. A certain woman. For the setting of this miracle see on v. 21. This is one of the comparatively few miracles recorded by all three synoptic writers. The account by Mark is more vivid than that of Matthew or of Luke, and contains a number of graphic details the other evangelists omit.

26. Grew worse. As the chronic condition of the malady became more and more apparent with the passage of time, and her funds were exhausted in a futile attempt to relieve it, the woman no doubt became more and more discouraged.

27. Of Jesus. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading “the things concerning Jesus,” that is, “the reports about Him.” As might be expected, word had spread rapidly (see on Mark 1:28; Luke 7:17, 18; 4:14).

In the press. Literally, “in the crowd.” Possibly this woman had planned for some time to reach Jesus, but His absence on the Second Galilean Tour seems to have made this, for the time being, impossible. When she learned that Jesus had returned to Capernaum she hastened to the shore of the lake, where He was teaching and healing (see on v. 21). But she searched for Him in vain. Learning, eventually, that He was at the home of Matthew (see on v. 21), she made her way there in the hope of reaching Him, but again arrived too late (see DA 343). Now, with the slow progress Jesus was making in the direction of the home of Jairus, she finally overtook Him.

But her malady had lowered the vital supply of blood in her body, and she was probably very weak physically in addition to being discouraged from the many vain attempts to secure healing at the hands of the physicians. Also, the nature of the disease itself, together with the ritual uncleanness involved, was embarrassing. It may be she felt hesitant to present her request orally to Jesus, particularly in the presence of so many strangers, lest He inquire as to the nature of her affliction, which He seems to have done sometimes (cf. ch. 10:51).

Touched his garment. According to Luke, the woman touched “the border” of Jesus’ garment (see ch. 8:44). Many who only touched “the hem” of Jesus’ garment “were made perfectly whole” (Matt. 14:36; cf. Acts 5:15; 19:12).

28. Touch. The touch that brought healing to the woman would be considered by the rabbis to have brought ritual uncleanness upon Christ.

Whole. Literally, “saved”; that is, healed of her sickness.

29. Straightway. That is, “immediately.”

Felt. Literally, “knew.” She was aware of the current of power (see on v. 30) that flowed from Christ into her at the moment she touched His garment. She knew that it had entered her feeble body and brought healing.

Plague. Gr. *mastix*, “a whip,” “a scourge,” or “a plague.” Incurable afflictions were commonly regarded as divine retribution for sins in the life (see on Mark 1:40; John 9:2).

30. Knowing. Gr. *epiginōskō*, “to know fully,” hence, “to recognize,” or “to perceive.” Jesus was conscious of what had happened the moment the woman touched

His garment. The record does not state whether Jesus knew in advance that this woman would touch Him. The will of the Father answered the unspoken plea of the woman *through* Him. It should be remembered that all Christ's miracles were "wrought by the power of God through the ministration of the angels" (DA 143).

Virtue. Gr. *dunamis*, literally, "power" (see on Mark 2:10; Luke 1:35). *Dunamis* is often translated "miracle," as in Mark 9:39, or "mighty works," as in ch. 6:2, 5, 14. With regard to the different terms used in the NT to refer to miracles see p. 208.

Who touched my clothes? Later, possibly as the result of this incident, many touched "the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole" (ch. 6:56).

31. Thronging. Gr. *sunthlibō* (see on v. 24).

32. He looked. Better, "He kept looking." Jesus seems not to have identified the woman immediately, probably in order to give her the opportunity to speak first. Several reasons may be advanced for Jesus' not letting the woman slip away quietly, unnoticed: (1) As with the faith of the centurion (see on Luke 7:9), Jesus wanted the faith of the woman to be an example that others might follow. (2) He desired her to carry away the lasting joy of knowing that she had been personally noticed and recognized by Jesus. (3) He wished to erase from her mind any superstitious thought that healing had come about as the result of a mere touch (see on Mark 5:34). (4) For her own benefit He desired her to acknowledge the blessing she had received. To be "saved" (see on v. 28) from the her disease, but without being "saved" from the disease of sin would prove only of temporary benefit.

33. Fearing. Probably she now felt that her previous fears had been well founded.

34. Thy faith. Jesus would have the woman understand that it was *faith* that had brought healing to her tortured body, not the surreptitious *touch*. To have the people regard Him with superstitious awe would thwart the very reason for which His miracles were performed (see on ch. 1:38). A public affirmation on His part that it was faith that brought healing would effectively preclude the rumor that healing had been secured through magic. However imperfect the woman's faith may have been, it was, nevertheless, genuine faith, a faith proportionate to her limited knowledge and understanding of the will and ways of God.

Go in peace. See on Jer. 6:14. The woman was to depart in "peace" of body and "peace" of soul (see on Mark 2:5, 10, in the joy of acceptance with God, as testified to by her new-found health).

Be whole. That is, "continue to be in health." It must not be supposed that healing occurred at this moment, as some have concluded, rather than previously, for the woman already knew that she was healed (see v. 29), and Jesus had already felt healing power go out from Him (see v. 30).

35. While he yet spake. Here Mark resumes the narrative of the raising of Jairus' daughter, interrupted by the story of the invalid woman (vs. 25–34). For the setting of the narrative see on v. 21.

Thy daughter is dead. Had Jairus' daughter already been dead, as might be inferred from Matt. 9:18, it would not have been necessary for messengers to bring him word of the fact (see on Matt. 9:18). Apparently Mark implies that the sad news was broken quietly to Jairus in the presence of the throng (see on Mark 5:24).

36. Heard. Important textual evidence (cf. p. 146) may be cited for the reading “overheard.” The word spoken quietly to Jairus “caught the ear of Jesus” (DA 343 342, 343).

Be not afraid. Where there is fear there is little faith. Faith drives out fear. Jairus had been sufficiently strong in faith so that he found no difficulty in believing that Jesus could heal his daughter (see on v. 23). Now he was called upon to exercise even greater faith—faith that the clutch of death itself could be broken. When fear haunts our souls and taunts our feeble faith, let us do as Jesus bade Jairus—“only believe,” for “all things are possible to him that believeth” (ch. 9:23).

37. Suffered no man. That is, “permitted no one” (see on Matt. 19:14). In addition to the three disciples here mentioned, the parents of the girl accompanied Jesus into the room where she lay (see Mark 5:40). The bedlam of the mourners (see on vs. 38, 39) and the coarse incredulity of the unbelieving crowd that had gathered in the home (see v. 40), made the presence of the mourners and unbelievers completely inappropriate to the solemn majesty of divine power about to be manifested by the One who had “life in himself” (John 5:26; cf. ch. 1:4).

Peter, and James, and John. Literally, “the Peter and James and John.” The use of the definite article in the Greek shows that the three disciples are here treated as one unit. This is the first instance where these three were selected from among the Twelve to share with Jesus certain of the more intimate experiences of His life on earth (see on Matt. 17:1). Perhaps in this instance the room was too small to accommodate all the Twelve.

38. Tumult. Matthew specifically mentions the flute players (Gr. *aulētai*, translated “minstrels,” see ch. 9:23), who even today attend Oriental funerals and sound out their doleful tunes. Their mournful melodies were, then as now, considered essential. The famous Rabbi Judah pointed out the duty of an Israelite in these words: “Even the poorest man in Israel [for his wife’s funeral] must provide no less than two flutes and one lamenting woman” (Mishnah *Kethuboth* 4. 4, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 266).

Wailed. This refers to the monotonous wail of the hired mourners, who would be numerous if the family was wealthy, as probably was true in this case.

39. Ado. Gr. *thorubeō*, “to make a noise,” “to disturb,” “to throw into confusion,” or “to wail tumultuously.” In Acts 17:5 *thorubeō* is translated “set . . . on an uproar.”

Sleepeth. No more appropriate comparison could be found for death than that of sleep, which so often means release from weariness, toil, disappointment, and pain. As the eyes of a weary child are closed in sleep for the night, so the eyes of those who love God and who look forward with confidence to the day when His voice shall awaken them to life immortal are closed in the peaceful and undisturbed sleep of death (see 1 Cor. 15:51–55; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17). The comforting metaphor by which “sleep” stands for “death” seems to have been Christ’s favorite way of referring to this experience (see on John 11:11–15). Death is a sleep, but it is a deep sleep from which only the great Life-giver can awaken one, for He alone has the keys to the tomb (see Rev. 1:18; cf. John 3:16; Rom. 6:23).

40. Laughed . . . to scorn. Gr. *katagelaō*, “to deride.” It was more than simple laughter. It is little wonder that Jesus drove them from the room before awakening the little girl from the sleep of death.

Them that were with him. That is, Peter, James, and John (see on v. 37).

41. *Talitha cumi.* These words are Aramaic, probably the very words Jesus spoke upon this occasion. Their use here testifies to the fact that Jesus spoke in Aramaic. Compare other Aramaic expressions Jesus used, such as “Ephphatha” (ch. 7:34) and “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani” (ch. 15:34).

42. *Straightway.* See on ch. 1:10.

Damsel arose. This is the only case of raising from the dead recorded in all three Synoptic Gospels. The raising of the young man of the city of Nain is recorded only in Luke (see ch. 7:11–15), and that of Lazarus, only in John (see ch. 11:1–45). In all three instances restoration was immediate and complete.

Twelve years. A detail recorded only by Mark.

Astonished with a great astonishment. This reflects a Hebrew (and Aramaic) method of expression used to intensify the thought of the verb. Here it simply means, “astonished (or amazed) greatly.”

43. *Charged them straitly.* That is, He gave them strict orders (cf. ch. 1:43). Why Jesus enjoined silence on the parents is not entirely clear. The charge was, however, in harmony with Christ’s repeated attempts, at this stage of His ministry, to avoid undue publicity (see on Mark 1:43, 44; cf. Matt. 8:4; 9:30).

Given her to eat. A tender evidence of the thoughtful care manifested by Jesus. This command implies, also, that the girl had been suffering from a disease that drained her physical strength. Possibly she had not been able to eat for some days.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–20DA 337–341, 404; GC 514, 515

4 DA 337

9 DA 338; GC 514

15 DA 338

18–20DA 339

19 DA 341; MH 98

21–24DA 342

21–43DA 342–348

23 MH 59

26 DA 343

29 MH 60

30–34ML 13; 5T 228

35 DA 342

39 DA 343, 539

41 DA 343

CHAPTER 6

1 *Christ is contemned of his countrymen.* 7 *He giveth the twelve power over unclean spirits.* 14 *Divers opinions of Christ.* 27 *John Baptist is beheaded, 29 and buried.* 30 *The apostles return from preaching.* 34 *The miracle of five loaves and two fishes.* 48 *Christ walketh on the sea: 53 and healeth all that touch him.*

1. *He went out.* [*Second Rejection at Nazareth, Mark 6:1–6=Matt. 13:54–58.* Major comment: Mark. See Closing Galilean Ministry; a Synopsis of the Life of Christ.] According to Matthew’s account, the second rejection of Jesus by the people of Nazareth occurred after the Sermon by the Sea, though how long after is not stated (see Matt.

13:53, 54; cf. DA 241). Matthew closely links the second rejection at Nazareth with the death of John the Baptist (see chs. 13:53 to 14:12). Mark gives it in connection with events of the Third Galilean Tour and with the death of John the Baptist (see Mark 6:1–30; cf. DA 360). The Baptist’s death must have come either shortly before or after the beginning of the tour, for it was the work of the Twelve on the Third Galilean Tour that led Herod to think that John the Baptist had come to life (see on v. 14). Thus it is likely that this final visit to Nazareth (see DA 241) took place in the winter of A.D. 30–31.

His own country. For a discussion of the probable time of Jesus’ first visit to Nazareth during the period of His Galilean ministry see Additional Note on Luke 4. Apparently the only way the gospel record can be harmonized is on the basis of two visits. Neither Matthew nor Mark mentions Nazareth by name in connection with this, the second visit, but there can be no doubt that Nazareth is here appropriately referred to as Jesus’ “own country” by virtue of the fact that He had been brought up there (see Luke 4:16; cf. ch. 2:51), that He was living there at the time He had taken up His lifework (see Mark 1:9), and that it was His parents’ home (see Luke 2:1–5). After leaving Nazareth to take up His ministry Jesus did not revisit it until He began His Galilean ministry. The time elapsed was about 18 months (see on Luke 4:16), probably from the autumn of A.D. 27 to the spring of A.D. 29 (see on Matt. 4:12). The Galilean ministry as a whole continued from the spring of A.D. 29 to the spring of A.D. 30. Thus it was toward the close of this period that the second and final visit to Nazareth took place (cf. DA 241).

2. Sabbath day. As upon the previous visit (Luke 4:16).

In the synagogue. As upon the previous occasion (see on Luke 4:16). For a description of a Jewish synagogue and of the synagogue service see pp. 56, 57.

Astonished. Evidently it seemed incredible to the people of Nazareth that One who had lived among them could be the Son of God.

This man. Literally, “this [fellow],” an expression often denoting contempt.

What wisdom is this? See on Isa. 11:2, 3; 50:4. Neither the Jewish leaders nor the townspeople of Nazareth appear to have thought of denying the infinitely superior intelligence, understanding, and wisdom of Jesus. It was altogether too obvious; in fact, it was this that troubled them.

Even such mighty works. See p. 208. The people of Nazareth could not deny the great miracles Jesus wrought any more than they could deny His wisdom. Whether He taught or worked miracles, they were constrained to admit that “he hath done all things well” (ch. 7:37).

3. The carpenter. Matthew reads, “the carpenter’s son” (ch. 13:55). Although in idiomatic Hebrew and Aramaic usage the expression “the carpenter’s son” may be no more than a circumlocution for “the carpenter,” there seems no reason to doubt that Joseph had been a carpenter by trade, and that prior to the time He took up His lifework, Jesus followed that trade (cf. DA 109). This, indeed, is one of the few NT side lights on Christ’s life between His childhood visit to the Temple and His baptism (see on Luke 2:51, 52).

Son of Mary. The fact that Jesus is here referred to as the “son of Mary” rather than as the “son of Joseph” strongly implies that Joseph was dead (cf. DA 109). Concerning Joseph as the “father” of Jesus see on Matt. 1:21; Luke 2:33.

Brother of James. As to Jesus’ brothers, see on Matt. 1:18, 25; 12:46. Many have confused this James with James the son of Alphaeus, usually because of the garbled

records of the early Church Fathers, or their own conclusions based on Gal. 1:19 and 2:9. The only certain mention of this James after the conversion of Jesus' brothers (see Acts 1:14; cf. John 7:5) is in Gal. 1:19, possibly also Jude 1. James "the Lord's brother" should not be confused with James the son of Alphaeus (see on Mark 3:18).

Juda. Probably the writer of the epistle of Jude, for he is identified as the "brother" of James, the only individual in the NT named Jude (or Juda) of whom such an identification is certain (see Jude 1; see on Mark 3:18).

His sisters. The plural indicates at least two, and leaves open the possibility of more.

Were offended. Gr. *skandalizō*, literally, "were tripped up" (see on Matt. 5:29).

4. A prophet. See on Gen. 20:7; Deut. 18:15.

Not without honour. Christ's statement seems to have been a commonly known proverb. If Jesus' own brothers did not believe Him to be the Messiah (see John 7:5), how could His former neighbors be expected to believe?

His own country. The people of Nazareth knew Him well (see on Luke 2:52). All of His daily contacts with them testified to His perfection of character, and this they had resented because it placed them in an unfavorable light. In His exemplary character they had seen nothing that particularly appealed to them, nothing that they appreciated or considered of value to them in achieving the objectives for which they lived.

His own kin. Even a year later His brothers had not come to believe in Him (see on John 7:5), though they were converted after His death and resurrection (see on Acts 1:14).

5. No mighty work. Jesus was hindered, not by any lack of power on His part, but by the people's lack of faith (see Matt. 13:58).

A few sick folk. Healed, apparently, of minor maladies. But there were no remarkable miracles such as Jesus had performed elsewhere.

6. He marvelled. A few months before this Jesus had "marvelled" at the faith of the centurion (see Matt. 8:10).

He went. Probably while the Twelve were making their circuit of the towns and villages of Galilee. Mark records Jesus' personal evangelistic activities before mentioning those of the Twelve (see v. 7), whereas Matthew follows the reverse order (see Matt. 11:1).

7. Called unto him the twelve. [*Third Galilean Tour, Mark 6:7–13=Matt. 9:36 to 11:1=Luke 9:1–6.* Major comment: Matthew.] For the original call and appointment of the Twelve see on ch. 3:13–19.

By two and two. See on ch. 3:14.

Power. Gr. *exousia*, "authority" (see on Mark 2:10; Luke 1:35).

8. Purse. Literally, "belt" (see on Matt. 10:9).

9. Coats. Literally, "tunics," or, perhaps, "shirts" (see on Matt. 10:10).

11. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of the remainder of v. 11.

12. Men should repent. The same message John (see Matt. 3:2) and Jesus (see Mark 1:15) had both preached. The Twelve were to offer healing for the soul as well as for the body.

13. Anointed with oil. Olive oil was commonly employed as a medication in ancient Palestine (cf. Luke 10:34), and was used both internally and externally. The literal use of oil as a medication may have provided the basis for its symbolic use here and later on in

the Christian church. Anointing with oil as an act of faith is mentioned only here and in James 5:14.

14. King Herod. [*Martyrdom of John the Baptist, Mark 6:14–29=Matt. 14:1, 2, 6–12=Luke 9:7–9.* Major comment: Mark. See The Ministry of Our Lord] Matthew mentions Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great and ruler of Galilee and Peraea by authority of Rome (see on Matt. 2:22; Luke 3:1). Both Matthew (ch. 14:1) and Luke refer to Herod Antipas by his official title, “tetrarch” (see on Luke 3:1). He was “king” only by Roman appointment, and the title “king” was permitted only as a courtesy. He ruled over his territory from the death of his father, Herod the Great, in 4 B.C., to A.D. 39. His mother was Malthace, a Samaritan, who was also the mother of Archelaus (see on Matt. 2:22). His official residence was probably at Tiberias, a city he built on the southwestern shore of the Lake of Galilee and named after the then-ruling Caesar, Tiberius. See p. 64; The Hasmonaeans and the Herods and Palestine Under the Herodians.

Heard of him. The extensive labors of the Twelve during the course of the Third Galilean Tour were evidently sufficient to call widespread attention to Jesus and His work, and to stir the fear of Herod that Jesus was John risen from the dead. Whereas on the two previous evangelistic expeditions there had been but one group going from village to village, now there were seven. Evidently the reports coming to Herod, from all quarters, revealed a rapid extension of the gospel. Whereas in the past Jesus may have appeared to the authorities to be no more than a solitary itinerant preacher accompanied by a motley group of followers, it was now evident that He represented a far larger movement. Herod could no longer help hearing of him.

John the Baptist was risen. It seems to have been superstition combined with a guilty conscience that led Herod to this conclusion.

Mighty works. See p. 208. John had performed no miracles (John 10:41).

15. Others said. See Mark 8:27, 28; Luke 9:19.

Elias. That is, Elijah. Concerning the OT prophecies about the return of Elijah see on Isa. 40:3–5; Mal. 3:1; 4:5, 6.

A prophet, or as one. According to the rumors, Jesus was either one of the ancient prophets come to life or was like one of them. In spite of the fact that John performed no miracles (John 10:41), even the leaders in Jerusalem, to say nothing of people generally (see Matt. 14:5; 21:26), had entertained the idea that he might be a prophet (see on John 1:19–27).

16. It is John. See on v. 14.

17. Bound him in prison. See on Luke 3:19, 20. John had probably been in prison in the fortress of Machaerus (see on Luke 3:20) from before the Passover of A.D. 29 (see Additional Note on Luke 4) to the following winter, a little less than one year.

Herodias’ See on Luke 3:19. Originally married to Philip (see below), she divorced him in preference for Herod Antipas. For his part, Herod had divorced the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia. Thus Herod and Herodias each had a living spouse. As a result of Herod’s divorcing his former wife, her father, Aretas, made war on Herod and defeated him. This defeat was looked upon by the Jews as a divine judgment upon Herod because of his indefensible alliance with Herodias (Josephus *Antiquities* xviii. 5. 1, 2).

His brother Philip’s wife. Not Philip the Tetrarch (see on Luke 3:1, 19), but another son of Herod the Great, by Mariamne II. Herod Antipas was a son of Herod the Great by Malthace, and thus a half brother of this Philip. Herodias was a granddaughter of Herod

the Great through the son of Mariamne I, another wife of Herod the Great. Herodias had previously married Philip, her father's half brother, then became consort of Antipas, another half uncle. See *The Hasmonaeans and the Herods*.

18. John had said. Undoubtedly Herod had personally listened to the preaching of John, and for a time it seemed that he would yield to the call to repentance (see v. 20; DA 214).

It is not lawful. The law of Moses strictly prohibited a marriage such as that between Herod and Herodias (Lev. 18:16; 20:21), and, according to Josephus, the Jews thoroughly disapproved of the union (*Antiquities* xviii. 5. 4).

19. Had a quarrel against him. The literal Greek, "was having [it] in for him," corresponds almost exactly to the modern colloquial expression, "had it in for him." Herodias hated John and bided her time to kill him. Knowing of the influence that John had exercised over the mind of Herod Antipas (see on v. 20), Herodias probably feared that the tetrarch might divorce her as John had advised (cf. DA 214).

20. A just man. Or, "a righteous man." John was like his parents, who "were both righteous before God" (see on Luke 1:6).

Observed. Gr. *suntēreō*, "to preserve [a thing from perishing or being lost]." Herod prevented Herodias from carrying out her design of putting the prophet to death (see v. 19). He fully intended to release him when he felt it expedient to do so (see DA 220, 221).

He did many things. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading "he was greatly perplexed," which parallels a statement in Luke 9:7.

Heard him gladly. John's message bore the divine credentials, and except for the influence of Herodias, Herod might have come out openly in favor of John.

21. A convenient day. That is, "a favorable time" for a vengeful Herodias to thwart Herod's intention to protect John and eventually release him (see on v. 20). The plans of Herodias had no doubt been well laid.

Made a supper. Or, "made a banquet." Perhaps in the palace at the fortress of Machaerus (see on vs. 17, 27).

Lords. Evidently these were the high functionaries of the civil branch of government.

High captains. Gr. *chiliarchoi*, "commanders of thousands," that is, the "officers" of Herod's military forces. In addition to civil and military leaders Herod undoubtedly invited others prominent in social and business life, the "chief [ones] of Galilee."

22. Daughter. This was Salome, daughter of Herodias by an earlier marriage (see on v. 17).

The said Herodias. Rather, "Herodias herself." What Mark here emphasizes is the fact that Herodias sent her *own* daughter to dance, rather than a professional dancer. Even by the standards of Herod's own court, no respectable young woman would have engaged in a voluptuous dance such as this. From any point of view this action exceeded the limits of propriety. Salome was nothing more than a pawn in her mother's scheme to do away with John.

Danced. Herodias well calculated that Salome's enticing beauty would entrance Herod and his guests.

Them that sat. That is, his guests (see on v. 21).

23. He sware. Herod's emphatic oath was made in the presence of all his guests. Evidently his head was completely turned by the unprecedented honor of having a royal

princess dance for his pleasure and that of his guests. Salome was a descendant through Herodias and Mariamne I (see on v. 17; see p. 64) of the royal Hasmonaean house, illustrious line of Jewish priests and princes.

Half of my kingdom. This represented, in hyperbolic figure, the height of generosity (see Esther 5:3; 7:2).

24. She went forth. Apparently the statement that Salome was “before instructed [literally, “prompted”] of her mother” (Matt. 14:8) means before she asked, not before she danced. Salome knew nothing of her mother’s sinister design at the time she was dancing before Herod and his guests. She simply became the instrument in the hands of her bloodthirsty mother.

What shall I ask? Rather, “What shall I ask for myself?” There would have been no point to this question if Salome had known all the time what to ask, nor would she, in fact, have needed to leave the king’s presence.

25. Straightway with haste. Urged on by Herodias, Salome apparently lost no time in presenting the fateful request to Herod lest, even in his drunken state, he should reflect upon his vainglorious promise and change his mind. Herodias’ insistence on immediate action may imply either that Herod tended to vacillate or that his admiration for John was known to be great, or both.

By and by. Gr. *exautēs*, “at once,” “immediately,” or “forthwith.” In Old English “by and by” meant “immediately.”

Charger. That is, “a platter.” The word “charger” is obsolete in the sense here used.

26. Exceeding sorry. Even in his inebriated state Herod felt keenly his personal responsibility toward John (see on v. 20). But Herodias had caught him in a moment of drunken weakness, and he felt powerless to act in harmony with what he knew to be right. Except for wine, Herod would probably have refused to give the order for execution. See on Matt. 4:3.

Their sakes. The public nature of his oath (see on v. 23), given before his guests of honor (see on v. 21), made it seem to Herod altogether impossible to break.

Reject. That is, reject or deny her request.

27. Immediately. According to Josephus (*Antiquities* xviii. 5. 2), John was imprisoned in the fortress of Machaerus (see on Luke 3:19, 20). The dispatch with which John was beheaded makes it almost certain that the birthday celebration was held in some place near the prison chamber.

Beheaded him. Herod feared John (v. 20), he feared the people (Matt. 14:5), he feared Herodias. He was a slave to his fears even though these fears were contradictory. Superstitiously, Herod feared John as much when he was dead as he had feared him when he was alive (see Mark 6:14, 16, 20).

28. Gave it to her mother. Salome had no use for the grisly gift. But nothing could possibly have been more gratifying to her bloodthirsty mother. About nine years later, in A.D. 39, Herod Antipas, accompanied by Herodias, was banished for aspiring to royal dignity (Josephus *Antiquities* xviii. 7; *War* ii. 9. 6 [183]).

29. Disciples heard. Apparently they were not with him in the fortress, though probably in the near vicinity where they might see him from time to time and assist him as opportunity offered. Afterward, John’s disciples came to Jesus with the report of what had happened (see Matt. 14:12), probably either shortly before or during the course of the Third Galilean Tour (see on Mark 6:1).

30. Apostles. [*Feeding the Five Thousand, Mark 6:30–44=Matt. 14:13–21=Luke 9:10–17=John 6:1–14.* Major comment: Mark and John. See Closing Galilean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] Mark’s only use of the word “apostles” (see on Matt. 10:2; Mark 3:14). Perhaps both Mark and Luke (see ch. 9:10) intended by the use of “apostles” at this point in the narrative to emphasize the new responsibility now theirs by virtue of being sent forth to teach and heal on their own account.

Gathered themselves together. That is, when they returned from the Third Galilean Tour (see on Matt. 9:36). They had probably been separated for a number of weeks, during the winter of A.D. 29–30, and now it was the early spring of A.D. 30, not long before the Passover (see John 6:4; cf. DA 364, 388). This reunion no doubt came at a prearranged time and place.

Told him all things. Jesus had sent the Twelve out by two’s, that they might have an opportunity to apply the principles they had observed previously in His own ministry. Now they made a thorough report of what had taken place during the course of their itinerary.

31. Come ye yourselves apart. The Twelve in particular were in need of relaxation and instruction. And even Jesus felt in need of respite from the throngs that pursued Him wherever He went and pressed upon Him from early dawn till late at night. The retirement of the disciples with Jesus to the vicinity of Bethsaida Julias and the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 are the only incidents in the life of Jesus between the baptism and the Triumphal Entry that are reported by all four gospel writers.

A desert place. That is, a lonely, solitary, or remote place (see on Matt. 3:1; Luke 1:80). The site chosen for this retreat from the busy highways of Galilee was in the vicinity of Bethsaida Julias (see Luke 9:10), at the northern end of the Lake of Galilee, east of the point where the Jordan enters the lake and thus within the territory of Herod Philip (see on Matt. 11:21). The little plain in which lies Bethsaida Julias is *El Batiḥa*, the traditional site of the feeding of the five thousand.

Rest a while. Whatever a person’s occupation, occasional change not only brings relaxation but imparts new vigor.

So much as to eat. As had been the case several months earlier (see ch. 3:20).

32. A desert place. See on v. 31.

Privately. They did their best to escape from Capernaum unnoticed.

33. The people saw them. In spite of their precautions some people evidently noticed their departure and observed the direction in which they set out to cross the lake.

Ran afoot thither. The distance from Capernaum to the plain known as *El Batiḥa*, in which lies Bethsaida Julias (see on v. 31), would be about 4 mi. (6.4 km.). The direct route across the lake would be about 3 mi. (5 km.).

34. When he came out. Although those who had come afoot knew the approximate place where the boat would touch the shore, they apparently did not know the exact spot. Jesus was alone with His disciples for a time on the hillside (see John 6:3; cf. v. 5). Together they talked over the problems encountered on their itinerary through the towns and villages of Galilee, and Jesus gave them counsel needed to correct mistakes of the past and prepare them for more effective ministry in days to come (see DA 361, 364).

Moved with compassion. Jesus voluntarily left the secluded spot on the hillside where He and His disciples had spent some time together, and graciously welcomed the people (cf. Luke 9:11).

Began to teach. According to the Greek, Jesus kept on teaching the people.

35. Now far spent. Luke says that “the day began to wear away” (ch. 9:12), literally, “to bend,” “to bow,” or “to incline itself” (see on v. 12). This would be between about 3 o’clock in the afternoon and sunset. The record implies that Jesus, His disciples, and the people had been without either food or rest during the entire day.

A desert place. See on v. 31.

The time is far passed. The Greek here is practically identical with that found previously in v. 35 and translated “the day was now far spent.”

36. Send them away. The disciples could see no solution to the problem but to dismiss the people. But the “compassion” of Jesus (see v. 34) extended to their physical well-being as well as to their spiritual.

Bread. That is, food in general, anything edible (literally, “what they were to eat”).

Nothing to eat. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of these words, which are, however, clearly implied by the context.

37. Give ye them to eat. In Greek the pronoun “ye” is emphatic, as though Jesus said, “Give ye them to eat.” Every command of God implies the power needed to carry out the command. From a human point of view it was absurd to think of finding bread, within walking distance and before nightfall, to satisfy the needs of such a throng. The requirement Jesus here made of the disciples was apparently as foolish as His earlier command to go fishing in the clear waters of the lake by day (see on Luke 5:5). That earlier experience might well have come to their minds had they but reflected upon the lesson Jesus then intended them to learn. God ever works through men to meet the physical and spiritual needs of their fellow men. This principle is fundamental to the gospel commission.

Two hundred pennyworth. That is, 200 Roman *denarii* (see p. 49). Even in modern times 200 average days’ wages of a common laborer would be considered barely sufficient to purchase enough food to supply a rather meager meal for a crowd of that size.

38. How many loaves? Jesus had already spoken to Philip regarding the problem of providing food for the multitude (see John 6:5, 6; cf. ch. 1:43). Like Peter and Andrew, Philip was a native of Bethsaida, and since that city was but a short distance from where the events of this memorable day took place, Philip, presumably, would have known where to secure food if anyone did. He was sincere, but slow to believe, as was evident more than once during his association with Christ as a disciple (see John 14:8–12; cf. DA 292). It was doubtless to give Philip an opportunity to strengthen his faith that Christ addressed this inquiry to him (see on John 6:5, 6). It was Philip, in fact, who asserted that the sum of 200 Roman *denarii* would not purchase a sufficient quantity of food (see John 6:7).

But it was Andrew, perhaps of a more practical turn of mind, who apparently took Christ at His word, and set out to discover what food was available (see John 6:8, 9). The hesitancy of Philip and the willingness of Andrew to step out by faith stand forth in striking contrast.

Go and see. Jesus “knew what he would do” (see John 6:6) from the very first. But, as in sending forth the Twelve, He led the disciples themselves to analyze the problem that confronted them and to discover a solution to it.

They say. It was Andrew who made the discovery of the simple lunch one lad had brought for himself, and relayed the report to Jesus (see John 6:8, 9).

Five, and two fishes. The five “loaves” were made of barley meal (John 6:9), and were probably round and flat in shape. Barley was much less expensive than wheat, and was the staple food of the poor. The fish were probably dried and ready to eat, as is so often the case in Oriental lands, ancient and modern. They were eaten along with the bread, as a sort of relish.

39. Sit down. Gr. *anaklinō*, “to lie down,” or “to recline.” This was the usual position taken at the table, at least by people of the upper classes (see on ch. 2:15).

By companies. The fact that Christ had the people recline in companies may imply that He asked them to arrange themselves much as they would if sitting about a table in their respective homes, with one point in the circle open to permit the disciples to enter and serve each group, somewhat as a servant would do in a home.

Green. This fact is mentioned only by Mark. Owing to the fact that rainfall was extremely scanty in Palestine from May through September (see Vol. II, p. 110), the grass would be green only in the winter or spring. It was now but a few days before the Passover of A.D. 30, and the grass would accordingly be at its best (see John 6:4). Thus Mark’s account is supplemented perfectly by that of John. See Additional Note on Matthew 15.

40. In ranks. Verse 39 refers particularly to the organization of each individual “company,” whereas here the reference is to the orderly arrangement of the various companies in relationship to one another. Order was apparent both in the arrangement of individuals within each group, and in the arrangement of the groups themselves.

By hundreds, and by fifties. The orderly arrangement of so large a throng probably was necessary in order that all might witness the miracle, the better to appreciate its significance, and that all might be reached readily with the “bread ... from heaven” they were about to receive.

41. Blessed. Gr. *eulogeō*, “to praise,” or “to invoke blessings.” John uses the word *eucharisteō*, “to be thankful,” “to give thanks” (ch. 6:11). There seems to have been something characteristic about the way Christ gave thanks (see Matt. 15:36; 26:26)—something the disciples no doubt witnessed daily during their association with Him. At Emmaus, Jesus “was known of them in breaking of bread” (Luke 24:35). Note also that in each instance Jesus took the bread in His hands before giving thanks for it. But the essential part of the “blessing” consisted in the recognition that food is a gift of God, and in thanking Him for it.

Break. Literally, “to break thoroughly,” or “to break in pieces.”

Loaves. See on v. 38.

Gave. Literally, “kept on giving.” The context suggests that the miracle occurred while the bread was in the hands of Jesus, between the act of breaking it and that of giving it out to the disciples. Jesus never performed a miracle except to meet a genuine need (see p. 209). So long as there was need the food kept on multiplying in His hands (cf. 1 Kings 17:16; 2 Kings 4:4–6).

To set before. A common expression for serving a meal. Each of the Twelve carried the miracle loaves in his own basket (see on v. 43), and served a certain number of the groups arranged “by companies,” “in ranks” upon the grass (see on v. 40). With empty baskets the disciples returned to Christ for more bread, and each time they returned He kept on giving out loaves and fishes. The orderly arrangement of the groups, the service of the disciples, and the unfailing supply of loaves and fishes provided the men, women, and children with all they could eat and more, within a short time.

Two fishes. See on v. 38.

42. They did all eat. Among the Jews the joys of the Messianic kingdom were often pictured under the figure of a banquet (see on Luke 13:29; 14:15), and it is conceivable that as the great multitude of people ate the food thus miraculously provided for them some turned their thoughts to Messianic prospects. On the same day they ate of the loaves and fishes the people had already concluded that Jesus was “that prophet” (see on John 6:14; cf. Deut. 18:15; Matt. 11:3; John 4:25) who was to come into the world. The undeniable miracle drove them to the inescapable conclusion that Jesus must be the One foretold by all the prophets (see Luke 24:27; John 1:45), the coming King of Israel (see Isa. 9:6, 7; see on Luke 1:32, 33). They attempted to crown Him king on the spot (see John 6:15). He who could raise the dead, heal the sick, and provide food for multitudes obviously had it in His power to deliver Israel from bondage to Rome. Under His leadership the armies of Israel would be invincible, and the fondest hopes of those who looked for a political messiah would be realized (see on Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:2; Luke 4:19).

The feeding of the 5,000 was the crowning miracle of the Galilean ministry, one witnessed by a vast throng, and one that cannot be explained away by skeptics either of Christ’s day or of ours. As a result of this miracle the Galilean ministry came abruptly to a climax (see on Luke 2:49). Compare the healing of the man at the Pool of Bethesda a year previously (see on John 5), which brought the early Judean ministry to a close.

Were filled. The miraculously multiplied bread—evidence of the genuineness of the miracle—was distributed to each person in the vast throng, not in minute quantity, but sufficient completely to satisfy the appetite. This abundance testified to the limitless power of Jesus. Only when the needs of all were fully satisfied was the supply halted. Jesus was as attentive to the physical needs of those who came to Him as He was to their spiritual needs. But the provision thus made to satisfy physical needs was intended to direct men to their infinitely more important spiritual needs and to the bread of life as the means of satisfying those needs (see John 6:26–51).

The *kind* of food provided was the simple fare of fisherman and peasant, and testified against luxury. The *manner* in which it was provided testified of the power of God by which all man’s needs are supplied. The *abundance* testified to the infinite resources of God and His ability to provide for us “above all that we ask or think” (Eph. 3:20). Collection of the *fragments* testified that none of God’s blessings are to be wasted. The participation of the *disciples* in the distribution of the food testified to the fact that the blessings of Heaven are made available to men through the agency of those who are willing to cooperate with the Omnipotent. The disciples were simply channels of blessing; they must receive before they could give.

The fact that the feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle recorded by all four evangelists, marks it as of unusual significance. For a comparison of this miracle with that of Feeding the Four Thousand see Additional Note on Matthew 15.

43. Baskets. Gr. *kophinos*, usually a small wicker basket such as a Jew would carry when taking a journey through regions where food would not otherwise be readily obtainable, and especially to avoid buying food from Gentiles (see on v. 41). The kind of basket referred to in ch. 8:8 is the Gr. *spuris*, a large wicker hamper used for carrying various kinds of loads, such as provisions for a group of people, a set of workman's tools, etc. Paul was let down over the wall of Damascus in a *spuris*. Later, Jesus carefully distinguishes (in the Greek) between the kind of basket, Gr. *kophinos*, used at the time of feeding the 5,000 (see Matt. 16:9; Mark 8:19) and the kind of basket, Gr. *spuris*, used when the 4,000 were fed (see Matt. 16:10; Mark 8:20).

Fragments. Gr. *klasma*, literally, "that which is broken off"; hence, "a fragment," or "a morsel." The context makes clear that these "fragments" were not partly eaten scraps, but portions originally left with each group by the disciples but found to be in excess of the needs of the group (see on v. 41), and thus unused. They are called "fragments" in the sense that they had been "broken" from the original five loaves (see on v. 41).

44. Men. Gr. *andres*, "adult males," that is, "men," as contrasted with women, rather than the Gr. *anthrōpoi*, "human beings," that is, "persons," in contrast to animals (see on ch. 2:27). Thus it is clear that there were 5,000 men present, "beside women and children" (see Matt. 14:21). It may be conservatively estimated that an equal number of women and children were present, swelling the total to more than 10,000 people.

45. Straightway. [*Jesus Walks on the Lake, Mark 6:45–56=Matt. 14:22–36=John 6:15–24.* Major comment: Matthew and John.]

Before unto Bethsaida. That is, "before Him unto Bethsaida."

46. Sent them away. Or, "taken leave of them." The Greek expression was a common term for courteous leave-taking.

47. Even was come. See on Matt. 14:23.

51. Sore amazed. That is, exceedingly astonished.

52. Considered not. Their attention was not upon the miracle they had just witnessed, but upon their own disappointment that Jesus had not allowed Himself to be crowned king (see on v. 42).

Hardened. See on Ex. 4:21. The hearts of the disciples were "hardened" in the sense that they did not understand the significance of the miracle of the loaves and the fishes.

55. Beds. See on ch. 2:4.

56. Whithersoever he entered. This statement seems to imply the passage of a period of time, and is either a summary statement of experiences during the weeks preceding, or of what took place for several days or weeks after the feeding of the 5,000. The feeding of the 5,000 took place shortly before the Passover (see John 6:4; cf. DA 364, 388). Evidently, then, this passage more likely refers to Jesus' ministry between the time of His feeding the 5,000 and His departure for Syrophenicia.

Streets. Literally, "market places," which were in the streets of the towns and villages (see on Matt. 11:16).

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16 DA 728
17, 18 SR 197
17–28DA 214–225
20 DA 214
23–26DA 221
25, 26 Te 51
30, 31 DA 359
31 ChS 249; DA 362, 363; GW 243, 246; MH 56, 58; ML 133; MM 287; TM 34; 7T 244,
292
32–44DA 364–371
34 DA 364
35, 36 DA 365
45–52DA 377–382
46 MH 58
55 DA 384
2

CHAPTER 7

1 *The Pharisees find fault at the disciples for eating with unwashen hands. 8 They break the commandment of God by the traditions of men. 14 Meat defileth not the man. 24 He healeth the Syrophenician woman's daughter of an unclean spirit, 31 and one that was deaf, and stammered in his speech.*

1. Then came. [*Contention About Tradition and Ceremonial Defilement, Mark 7:1–23=Matt. 15:1–20.* Major comment: Mark. See Closing Galilean Ministry; cf. pp. 18, 96–100.] At this point in the narrative both Matthew and Mark pass over the significant incident in the synagogue at Capernaum, when, at the close of the discourse on the Bread of Life, popular sentiment in Galilee turned against Jesus (see John 6:25 to 7:1; see on Matt. 15:21). Contrary to custom, Jesus had remained in Galilee during the Passover season (see John 7:1; cf. DA 395), no doubt quietly ministering to the needs of the people (see on Mark 6:56). Soon after the feast, probably during the latter part of April or early May, there occurred this encounter with the scribes and Pharisees, who had recently returned from Jerusalem.

Pharisees. See pp. 51, 52.

Scribes. See p. 55; see on ch. 1:22.

From Jerusalem. The Jewish leaders had been greatly alarmed by the rapid extension of the gospel evidenced by the recent Third Galilean Tour (see on Matt. 15:21; Mark 6:14). The men here referred to were no doubt members of a more or less official delegation from the Sanhedrin, dispatched for the specific purpose of seeking an excuse to bring the ministry of Jesus to a close (cf. DA 395).

2. When they saw. The Pharisees and scribes knew, of course, that the disciples were simply following the custom adopted by Jesus (cf. on Luke 11:38). Indirectly, this was a personal challenge to Jesus. The scribes and Pharisees intended to attribute to Him disregard of their laws. By proceeding indirectly they would probably also avoid

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Mk 3:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

offending those who thought well of Jesus. The leaders in Jerusalem looked upon the illiterate and simple people of Galilee with contempt, and commonly referred to them as ‘*amme ha’areš*, literally, “people of the soil” (see p. 55). It was in the company of such a crowd of these simplehearted Galileans that the present encounter took place.

Bread. Literally, “breads,” but here probably meaning “food” in general.

Defiled. Gr. *koinos*, originally meaning “common,” that is, shared by many people. Later it came to mean “vulgar,” or “profane,” and it is in this sense that Mark uses the word here (cf. on Acts 10:14).

Unwashed, hands. Evidently writing for non-Jews (see p. 564), who might not otherwise understand the nature of the challenge the spies now posed, Mark defines what he means by “defiled.” Matthew, probably writing primarily for Jews (see p. 273), makes no such explanatory statement. The washing here referred to was strictly ritualistic, not sanitary. This rite is said to have consisted of pouring a small quantity of water upon the fingers and palm of first one hand and then the other with the hand tilted so that the water ran from the palm to the wrist, but no farther (all the time care being taken lest the water run back into the palm), and then alternately rubbing one hand with the palm of the other hand. The minimum amount of water prescribed was that which could be contained in one and a half egg shells. It seems, however, that where water was not available a dry ablution was permitted in which a person would simply go through the motions of washing his hands in the prescribed manner.

3. Except they wash. See on v. 2.

Oft. Gr. *pugmē*, literally, “fist”; in the form here used, “with the fist.” It has been suggested that *pugmē* may here mean “with a fist full [of water].” Textual evidence may also be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading *pukna*, meaning “vigorously,” “diligently,” or “frequently.”

Tradition. Gr. *paradosis*, literally “a giving up,” or “a giving over”; hence, “a tradition,” which is given over to someone by word of mouth or by writing. As used in the Gospels *paradosis* refers to the massive body of oral, rabbinical regulations that had grown up around the Torah (see on Deut. 31:9; Prov. 3:1). The traditions of the rabbis were the specific target of Jesus’ attacks upon the Jewish religious system of His day. The English word “tradition” means “that which is handed down [that is, from teacher to pupil, or from generation to generation].”

In process of time this oral tradition, originally intended to protect the written law of the OT, came to be considered more sacred than the law itself (see DA 395). Presumably, by a mechanical obedience to the requirements of oral tradition, a person would automatically be keeping the written law, including the Ten Commandments. In other words, if a person complied with the letter of the traditional interpretation of the law, he need not concern himself with the spirit of the written law. This legalistic system reduced religion to a matter of form and banished the spirit of true worship and obedience, without which a man serves God in vain (see John 4:23, 24; cf. Mark 7:7). A system of righteousness obtained by the “works” of the law superseded the plan of salvation, through which God designed that men should attain unto the righteousness which is by faith (see Rom. 9:31, 32; 10:3).

Christ sought to restore all God's revealed instructions to their rightful place in the thinking and living of His people. He sought to accord the words of God priority over the words of men. He sought to do away with mere outward forms of religion and to cultivate the true spirit of religion in the heart.

Elders. That is, the older rabbis or expositors of the law.

4. Market. That is, the market place in the open street, where produce was bought and sold (see on Matt. 11:16). Rabbinical thought considered it inevitable that a person mingling with the throng in the market place would come into contact with persons or things that were ceremonially unclean, and thus "defiling."

Wash. Textual evidence may also be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading "purify."

Other things. Perhaps including vessels, clothing (see Lev. 11:32), hands and feet (cf. Ex. 30:19–21).

Received to hold. Tradition is "handed down" by one generation and "received" to hold" by the next. It is given by the teacher and received by the student.

Pots. Gr. *xestai* (singular *xestēs*), a Roman measure (*sextarius*) containing about half a pint (see p. 50). *Xestēs* is one of a number of words of Latin derivation found in the Gospel of Mark.

Brasen. Literally, "bronze," or "copper."

Tables. Literally, "couches," or "beds." However, textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between retaining and omitting "tables."

5. Walk. In a figurative sense, "live." Compare Enoch's "walk" with God (see Gen. 5:24). It was the disciples' way of life, or manner of living, that disturbed the Pharisees and the scribes.

6. Esaias prophesied. See on Isa. 29:13. Isaiah's words were descriptive of Israel in his own day, as the context makes clear, but they were equally true of the Jews in Christ's day (see on Deut. 18:15). Thus when Christ said, "Esaias prophesied of you," He did not mean that Isaiah predicted something true particularly and exclusively of the Jews of Christ's day, but rather that Isaiah's description of Israel in his day applied "well" (see Mark 7:6) to the people of Christ's day also.

Hypocrites. See on Matt. 6:2.

Honoureth me. With a presence of obeying the will of God the "elders" (v. 3) were in reality "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (v. 7). It was a question of salvation by faith or by works. Jesus affirmed that those who worship God must do so "in spirit and in truth" (see John 4:23, 24). His emphasis on this truth brought Christ into bitter conflict with the Jewish leaders. The danger of exalting human precepts and even human interpretations of divine requirements above the "weightier matters of the law" (Matt. 23:23) is no less today than it was then.

7. Teaching for doctrines. Literally, "teaching [for] teachings."

8. Commandment of God. The singular form, as here, refers to all that God has commanded—all His revealed will (see on Matt. 22:37, 39). God's "commandment is exceeding broad" (Ps. 119:96); it includes "the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13). The ideal set before us is that of being "perfect," even as our "Father which is in heaven is perfect" (see on Matt. 5:48).

Tradition. The "tradition of men" stands forth in uncompromising contrast with the "commandment of God."

The washing. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of the remainder of v. 8, beginning with these words. The statement is, however, unquestionably true, for the same thought is expressed in vs. 4, 13.

9. Full well. Note the irony implicit in Christ's words.

10. Moses said. The first part of Christ's quotation is from the fifth commandment, and the second is from the civil code of laws (see Ex. 21:17).

Die the death. The Greek of this phrase is a reflection of the Hebrew idiom meaning "surely die," literally, "dying you will die" (see on Gen. 2:17). In other words, death was to be the inevitable penalty for an infraction of the fifth commandment.

11. But ye say. Jesus here gives a specific illustration of what He meant when He said, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition" (v. 9, RSV). Hence Jesus is here substantiating the fact that the Jews were worshipping God in vain (see v. 7). They accused Christ of abrogating the law, but He made it plain that they, by their traditional interpretation of the law, had, in fact, done the very thing of which they falsely accused Him (see on Matt. 5:17–19, 21, 22).

Corban. Gr. *korban*, from the Heb. *qorban*, "a gift," "an offering," literally, "that which is brought near." In Oriental lands one would never think of approaching or "drawing near" to a superior without presenting a "gift." Anything over which a man pronounced the words, "It is Corban," was thereby dedicated to God and the Temple.

A gift. Apparently writing primarily for non-Jewish readers (see p. 564), Mark here interprets a word that had little or no meaning to them.

He shall be free. The italics reveal that this entire clause has been supplied by the translators of the KJV, who apparently thus attempted to clarify the meaning for English readers.

12. Suffer. Rather "permit" (see on Matt. 19:14).

No more to do ought. A man might thus defraud his own parents in the name of religion, with the approval of the priests and under the pretense that God required this of him.

Anything over which the word "Corban" had been pronounced was thereby devoted to sacred—Temple—use (see on v. 11). The parents were not permitted to touch anything thus "dedicated," yet the undutiful son was permitted to make use of it as long as he lived. He avoided his filial duty by a profession of superior piety. By this devious procedure the priests connived with their greedy parishioners to relieve the latter from the solemn obligation of providing for their parents.

13. Of none effect. That is, for all practical purposes, invalidating the fifth commandment. Jesus stood before the assembled throng as the champion of their rights, whereas the scribes and Pharisees were revealed in their true light as hypocrites (see v. 6) and as enemies of both God and their fellow men.

Many such like things. The example Christ here employed was not an isolated one, as the scribes and Pharisees themselves well knew.

14. All. Gr. *panta*. However, textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading *palin*, "again." This reading would imply that Jesus had been addressing the multitude when the scribes and Pharisees interrupted with their protest (see v. 2). Now that Jesus had silenced His critics He again addressed Himself to the people, with the purpose of making clear the true nature of the problem involved in the conflict over tradition (see on v. 3).

Hearken. The people must give diligent attention if they would see through the hypocrisy of their spiritual leaders.

15. Nothing from without. Commentators generally miss the point of vs. 15–23 by applying them to the problem of clean and unclean flesh foods as differentiated in Lev. 11. The context makes emphatically clear that Jesus was not calling into question in any way precept of the OT, but rather was denying the validity of oral tradition (see on Mark 7:3), and here specifically the tradition that declared food eaten with hands improperly washed (in a ritualistic sense) became the cause of defilement (see on v. 2). It was always, and exclusively, “the commandments of men” (v. 7) against which Jesus protested, in sharp distinction to the “commandment of God” (v. 8) as set forth in the Scriptures. To apply vs. 15–23 to the matter of clean and unclean meats is to ignore the context completely. Had Jesus at this time eliminated the distinction between clean and unclean flesh foods it is obvious that Peter would not later have responded as he did to the idea of eating unclean flesh foods (see on Acts 10:9–18, 34; 11:5–18).

It should be emphasized that the problem under discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees had nothing whatever to do with the *kind* of food to be eaten, but *only* with the way in which it was to be eaten—whether with or without ritual hand washing (see on vs. 2, 3). According to Jewish regulations, even meat that was clean according to Lev. 11 might still be considered unclean by reason of contact with unclean persons (see on Mark 6:43).

Things which come out. For a list of the “things” Christ refers to see vs. 21–23. Here Christ affirms that *moral* defilement from breaking “the commandment of God” is of vastly greater consequence than *ritual* defilement, particularly so when the latter is based exclusively on “the tradition of men” (see on vs. 7, 8). Defilement of the soul, Jesus says, is a far more serious matter than ritual defilement of the body, occasioned by contact with persons or things that are ceremonially unclean.

They that defile. See vs. 21–23. Even in the OT God specifically states that He is not pleased with the mere forms of ritual worship (see Isa. 1:11–13; Micah 6:6–8), practiced as an end in themselves.

16. Man have ears. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between including and excluding v. 16. However, Christ often used this expression (see Matt 11:15; etc.), and it is certainly appropriate to the context here.

17. The house. Rather, “a house,” possibly the house of Peter in Capernaum (see on chs. 1:29; 2:1). The remainder of this section was addressed to the disciples in private (ch. 7:17–23).

His disciples. According to Matthew it was Peter, as usual, who acted as spokesman for the group (see on Matt. 14:28).

Parable. See pp. 203-207. A parable might be only a pithy saying, however brief. Here it refers to the figure employed in v. 15, about things entering into a man and things coming out of a man. If this “parable” had proved to be a riddle even to the disciples, the multitude could hardly have grasped its full significance (see on v. 14).

18. Without understanding also. That is, like the crowd of people to whom the “parable” had been spoken. It was only reasonable to expect the disciples to be in advance of the common people when it came to understanding the truths of salvation.

19. His heart. That is, his mind (see on Matt. 5:8). In other words, eating with unwashed hands had no *moral* effect whatever upon a man.

Into the belly. Ceremonially unclean foods (see on v. 15) went to the stomach, and there was no means by which the ceremonial uncleanness supposed to attach to them could be assimilated into the structure of the body.

Draught. Gr. *aphedrōn*, “a privy,” or “a toilet.” The word does not refer, as is commonly supposed, to a part of the human body.

Purging all meats. Literally, “making clean all foods [Gr. *bromata*, see on Luke 3:11].” In the KJV this statement appears to be a part of Christ’s instruction and to mean that the process of digestion and elimination has the result of “purging all meats.” The Greek, however, makes it clear that these are not the words of Christ, but rather those of Mark, and that they constitute his comment on Christ’s meaning. Accordingly, it is necessary to understand this expression in relation to the words “he saith unto them” of v. 18. Thus the latter part of v. 19 would read, “[this He saith unto them] making all foods clean,” or “thus he declared all foods clean” (RSV)—that is, irrespective of whether the eater had or had not performed the prescribed ritual ablution. This was the very point at issue (see on v. 2).

In the second place, it should be noted that the Greek word *bromata*, translated “meats,” means simply “that which is eaten,” “food,” and includes all kinds of food; it never denotes the flesh of animals as distinguished from other kinds of food. To limit the words “purging all meats” to flesh foods and to conclude that Christ here abolished the distinction between clean and unclean *flesh* used as food (see Lev. 11) is to ignore completely the meaning of the Greek.

In the third place, the context (vs. 1–14, 20–23) deals, not with biological uncleanness, but with uncleanness supposedly incurred from the omission of ritual washing (see on v. 15). The *kind* of food the disciples ate (vs. 2, 5) is not even referred to, but only the *way* in which they ate (see on vs. 2, 5, 15). Throughout, Christ deals with the problem of the “commandment of God” versus the “tradition of men” (see on vs. 5–15, 19). See on vs. 21–23.

20. Cometh out. See on vs. 15, 19.

21. From within. Jesus concludes His remarks with a statement of what *does* “defile the man” (v. 23). Defilement, He says, is moral, not ceremonial (see on v. 15). It affects the soul, not the body.

Evil thoughts. Jesus enumerates 13 different things that “defile” men. Compare the list here given with those of Rom. 1:29–31 and Gal. 5:19–21.

Fornications. Gr. *porneiai*, a general term including all forms of illicit sex relations.

22. Covetousness. Gr. *pleonexiai*, meaning “greedy desires to have more,” hence, “cupidity,” “covetousness,” or “avarice.” The idea of getting more and more has become a mania with persons of this character.

Wickedness. Gr. *ponēriai*, wickedness in general, also more specifically, as is probably the case here, “malice.”

Lasciviousness. Or, “licentiousness.”

An evil eye. A Greek rendition of an idiomatic Hebrew expression (see Deut. 15:9) probably meaning “envy,” “jealousy,” or a “grudging spirit.”

Blasphemy. Gr. *blasphēmia*, meaning “blasphemy” with reference to God, but “slander” when directed against men, as here. For the use of the word in the sense of “blasphemy” see on Matt. 12:31.

Foolishness. That is, the quality of being “without sense.” “Folly” would be another possible rendering here.

23. These evil things. See on vs. 2–4, 15, 19. For lists of the positive traits of character with which the Christian is to replace these negative traits, see Gal. 5:22, 23; 2 Peter 1:4–8. Concerning the danger of attempting to remove the evil traits without cultivating the good traits in their place, see on Matt. 12:43–45.

24. From thence he arose. [*Withdrawal to Phoenicia, Mark 7:24–30=Matt. 15:21–28.* Major comment: Matthew.]

26. Greek. That is, “a Gentile,” not necessarily one who was of Greek ancestry or birth (see Rom. 1:16; DA 399).

31. Departing. [*A Deaf-Mute Healed; Miracles in Decapolis, Mark 7:31–37=Matt. 15:29–31.* Major comment: Mark. See Retirement from Public Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] Concerning the region Mark here refers to, from which Christ now “departed,” see on Matt. 15:21. Matthew says nothing of the route Jesus followed upon the return journey from Phoenicia.

Coasts. Literally, “boundaries,” here meaning “territory.”

And Sidon. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “through Sidon,” meaning that from the vicinity of Tyre Jesus went farther northward before turning east and south in the direction of Decapolis (cf. DA 404).

Sea of Galilee. Probably proceeding southward along the eastern shore of the lake.

Decapolis. See p. 46; see on Matt. 4:25.

32. Bring unto him. Apparently the afflicted man did not come of his own volition, having never heard of Christ. Evidently it was the faith of the man’s friends that led him to Jesus. Decapolis was the region in which Christ had healed the demoniacs of Gadara, who had carried out, with faithfulness and zeal, their commission to tell their heathen neighbors of Jesus (see on ch. 5:19, 20). Quite possibly as the result of the work of the formerly demon-possessed men the friends of this deaf-mute decided to bring him to Christ.

Deaf. Gr. *kōphos*, literally, “blunt,” “dull”; here used in reference to the sense of hearing (see on Luke 1:22).

An impediment. This man was not absolutely dumb, for when healed he “spoke plain” (v. 35), implying that prior to being healed he could speak, though not plainly. His inability to speak clearly and distinctly may have been a result of his deafness.

33. Took him aside. As He did later with the blind man at Bethsaida Julias (see ch. 8:22–26). Both districts were largely inhabited by heathen (see on Matt. 4:25), and thus it seems probable that this man was likewise a Gentile. Perhaps Jesus took the deaf-mute aside because the unusual procedure He followed in healing him might be misunderstood by the unthinking crowd and interpreted as a form of magic similar to the incantations of heathen miracle workers.

Put his fingers. Literally, “thrust his fingers” into the man’s ears. It has been suggested that by this action Jesus sought to convey to the afflicted man the idea that He was interested in his unfortunate condition.

Spit. Although ancient literature preserves numerous examples of the use of saliva by physicians and wonder-workers who believed it able to communicate healing from their bodies to those of their patients, and thus to have curative properties, there is no apparent reason why Jesus chose here to heal in this manner, so unusual for Him. Some have suggested the possibility that this gesture was simply a concession to the man's unavoidable ignorance and dullness of perception. But whatever the reason may have been, the entire procedure here followed closely resembles that of the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida (see ch. 8:22–26).

Touched his tongue. The man was not only deaf, but, for practical purposes, dumb also (see on v. 32), and Christ touched both organs that were in need of healing.

34. Looking up. This is the only occasion of healing of which it is recorded that Jesus cast His gaze heavenward. He did so, however, at the feeding of the 5,000 when blessing the loaves and the fishes (see ch. 6:41), at the raising of Lazarus (see John 11:41), and at the time of His intercessory prayer for His disciples (see John 17:1). Apparently upon this occasion the purpose of the gesture was to direct the deaf-mute's thoughts to God and heaven, in order to make clear to him that healing would come only through divine power.

Sighed. Gr. *stenazō*, “to sigh,” or “to groan.” This was not a part of the process of communicating with the afflicted man, but an expression of Jesus' own reaction as a human being to human suffering and weakness (see on John 1:14). In the deafness and stammering speech of the man He saw a pathetic picture of the deafness of human hearts to the message He bore, and of the faltering, meaningless lives men so often lead.

Ephphatha. An Aramaic expression preserved by Mark (see on ch. 5:41), undoubtedly the very word Jesus used upon this occasion.

Be opened. Referring, of course, to the man's ears and to the restoration of his hearing. Mark here translates the Aramaic expression for the benefit of his readers.

35. String. Gr. *desmos*, “a bond,” or “a band.” This does not necessarily imply any defect in the man's organs of speech, though this may be the meaning.

Plain. Gr. *orthōs*, “straightly,” “rightly,” or “correctly.” This clearly implies that the man had been able to speak, but so indistinctly as to be understood only with difficulty.

36. Tell no man. As Jesus had so often commanded those for whom unusual miracles of healing were performed (see Matt. 8:4; 9:30; 12:16; cf. 17:9; Mark 5:43; etc.; see on Mark 1:44). In this predominantly Gentile region His chief reason for enjoining silence may have been His desire to avoid arousing the hope of the people in general that the ministry of which they had, by now, heard so much, was to be repeated here in a large way. The heathen, in general at least, were unprepared to understand and appreciate the true nature of His message, but where He did find Gentiles who gave evidence of great faith Jesus seems to have honored that faith.

So much the more. The double comparative points to the deepest possible impression on the minds of the throng. How impossible it must have been for them to keep silent about the greatest happenings ever known in the history of Israel! How overwhelming the evidence of Christ's divinity!

37. All things well. This was the verdict of the heathen who had come to know something of Jesus through the two cured demoniacs of Gadara (see on ch. 5:20). Like the common people of Galilee, the heathen “heard him gladly” (see on ch. 12:37).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 DA 395
1–23DA 395–398
7 COL 110; EW 124
9–12DA 396
11 DA 397, 408
13 7T 287
24–30AA 19
24–36DA 399–403
26–30GC 515
31–37DA 404

CHAPTER 8

1 *Christ feedeth the people miraculously: 10 refuseth to give a sign to the Pharisees: 14 admonisheth his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod: 22 giveth a blind man his sight: 27 acknowledgeth that he is the Christ, who should suffer and rise again: 34 and exhorteth to patience in persecution for the profession of the gospel.*

1. In those days. [*Feeding the Four Thousand, Mark 8:1–10=Matt. 15:32–39.* Major comment: Matthew.]

Very. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “again.” This seems to imply that the feeding of the 5,000 is here referred to indirectly (see on Matt. 15:32).

11. Pharisees came forth. [*The Demand for a Sign, Mark 8:11–21=Matt. 16:1–12.* Major comment: Matthew.]

12. Sighed deeply. A detail noted only by Mark. Jesus was disappointed at their slowness to perceive spiritual truth (see on Matt. 16:9; Mark 7:34).

14. One loaf. Another detail noted only by Mark.

15. Leaven of Herod. That is, the evil influence of Herod, particularly his worldliness and vacillating character (see on Matt. 13:33; 16:6). In the parallel passage in Matthew (ch. 16:6) the Sadducees appear in the place of Herod. Inasmuch as the Sadducees consistently courted the favor of the ruling power and were themselves worldly-minded (see p. 52), their chief interests were closely identified with those of Herod, and they interpreted his policies to the Jewish nation. Thus, so far as general meaning and influence are concerned, the terms given in Matthew and Mark are interchangeable.

22. He cometh. [*The Blind Man Near Bethsaida, Mark 8:22–26.* See Retirement from Public Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] Jesus and the disciples had recently arrived from Magdala (see on Matt. 16:1, 5), and after this incident, continued on their way to Caesarea Philippi (see Mark 8:27; see on Matt. 16:13). In coming to Bethsaida (see on Matt. 11:21), Jesus once more forsook Galilee, for the same reasons that had occasioned His withdrawal to Phoenicia a few weeks before this (see on Matt. 15:21; 16:13). The miracle performed upon this occasion resembles in many respects that performed for the deaf-mute in Decapolis not long previously (see on Mark 7:31–37).

They bring. As also in the case of the deaf-mute of Decapolis (see on ch. 7:32).

23. Led him out. There were probably at least two reasons for this: (1) to avoid publicity (see on v. 26), and (2) in order to help the blind man understand and concentrate upon what Christ was about to do for him (cf. on chs. 5:37, 40; 7:33). Jesus seems to have

performed comparatively few miracles during the period of His public ministry, and in most instances He was among a population that was largely heathen.

If he saw ought. This is the only recorded occasion on which Jesus asked such a question, and apparently it was done here with the objective of strengthening the man's imperfect faith (see on v. 24).

24. Men as trees. This is the only recorded instance in which Jesus performed a cure in two stages. There is no apparent reason for the use of this method in this case. However, it should be noted that, as partial vision was restored to the man, his faith increased and he was ready to believe that Jesus could cure him completely (see on v. 23).

25. Put his hands. See on chs. 7:33; 8:23.

Every man. Better, "everything."

Clearly. Gr. *tēlaugōs*, literally, "far shining," that is "at a distance and clearly."

Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading *dēlaugōs*, "radiantly," or "in full light."

26. The town. That is, Bethsaida (see on v. 22). Apparently the man's home was not in this city, which Jesus immediately told him not to enter. This restriction was evidently intended to prevent news of the miracle from spreading, and thus aid Jesus in His endeavor to secure retirement (see on v. 22).

27. Jesus went out. [*Withdrawal to Caesarea Philippi: The Great Confession, Mark 8:27 to 9:1=Matt. 16:13-28=Luke 9:18-27. Major comment: Matthew.*]

31. He began to teach. For comment see on Matt. 16:21.

32. Openly. That is, "plainly," or "without reserve." Mark does not mean that Jesus made a public announcement of the lesson He now gave the disciples, but rather that He discussed it with them in plain, literal language.

34. People. Literally, "crowd." There were apparently others with Jesus besides His regular disciples, possibly Jewish residents of the region who had heard of Him (see on Matt. 16:24).

35. Gospel's. See on ch. 1:1. Only Mark has this detail of the story. Here Jesus identifies Himself with His message (see John 6:51, 63).

38. Ashamed. See on Matt. 10:32; cf. Rom. 1:16.

Adulterous and sinful generation. See on Matt. 11:16; 12:39. Another detail of this occasion recorded only by Mark (see on v. 35).

The glory. A clear reference to the second advent of Christ (see on Matt. 25:31), of which event the Transfiguration, which follows next in the record, was a miniature demonstration (see on Matt. 16:28).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-21DA 405-409

12 DA 406, 407

18 5T 464

24 Ev 594; MM 98; 1T 462

27 DA 418

27-38DA 410-418

31 SR 205

34 CH 590; Ev 90; FE 511; 2T 178; 4T 521, 632; 8T 209

36 AA 366; COL 374; CS 213, 217; 4T 46, 53

36, 37 CG 329; CH 593; COL 267; CS 74, 84; Ed 145; Ev 559; PK 274; 1T 706; 2T 59; 3T 250; 6T 78

38 DA 422; 5T 588

CHAPTER 9

2 *Jesus is transfigured.* 11 *He instructeth his disciples concerning the coming of Elias:* 14 *casteth forth a dumb and deaf spirit:* 30 *foretelleth his death and resurrection:* 33 *exhorteth his disciples to humility:* 38 *bidding them not to prohibit such as be not against them, nor to give offence to any of the faithful.*

1. *Some of them.* The first verse of ch. 9 more properly belongs as the closing verse of ch. 8 (cf. Matt. 16:28; Luke 9:27).

2. *After six days.* [*The Transfiguration, Mark 9:2–13=Matt. 17:1–13=Luke 9:28–36.* Major comment: Matthew.]

3. *As snow.* Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of these words.

White them. Or, “bleach them.”

10. *Kept that saying.* In spite of the fact that they missed much of what it was their privilege to learn from the experience, the disciples evidently were impressed by Christ’s statement that He would rise from the dead. However, they could not grasp the idea of a suffering Messiah. They were still blinded by the popular concept of the Messiah as a mighty conqueror (see on Luke 4:19).

Rising from the dead. The disciples were puzzled as to what connection such an event might have with the One whom they considered to be the Messiah.

12. *It is written.* See Ps. 22; Isa. 53; etc.; see on Luke 24:26.

Son of man. Jesus here uses the familiar designation by which He commonly referred to Himself (see on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10).

Set at nought. Or, “treated with mockery.”

14. *When he came.* [*The Demon-possessed Boy, Mark 9:14–29=Matt. 17:4–21=Luke 9:37–43^a.* Major comment: Mark. See Retirement from Public Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] On the day following the Transfiguration, Jesus and the three disciples descended from the mount of transfiguration to the plain below, where the other nine awaited their return (see Luke 9:37; cf. DA 426). Either of the two Galilean “plains” specifically mentioned in the Bible, the plain of Gennesaret (see on Luke 5:1) or the Valley of Esdraelon, is considered to be a likely area for the vicinity of the mount of the transfiguration. Probably that unnamed mount was not far from one or the other of these “plains” (see on Matt. 17:1).

Scribes. See p. 55.

Questioning with them. That is, arguing with them or heckling them, as the context makes plain. The attitude of the scribes was obviously hostile. This detail is mentioned only by Mark. These hostile scribes may have been some of the ones who “came from Jerusalem” for the purpose of alienating the respect of the people for Jesus and to report on what He said and did (see on Mark 7:1; Matt. 16:1). As so often in the past, they attacked Jesus through His disciples (see Mark 2:16, 18, 24; 7:5). On this occasion they sought to represent Jesus and His disciples as impostors by making much of the fact that here was a demon over which the disciples were powerless (cf. DA 427).

15. *Greatly amazed.* The reason for amazement at the approach of Jesus is perhaps best explained as the reaction of the crowd to the traces of glory that undoubtedly

remained on the faces of those who had witnessed the Transfiguration (cf. Ex. 34:29–35; DA 427).

16. He asked the scribes. It seems that the scribes became silent as Jesus approached. No doubt the tense atmosphere that prevailed, and for that matter, the very presence of the scribes, made it evident that they had been belaboring the nine disciples.

17. One of the multitude. Having been silenced and chagrined by Jesus whenever they had endeavored to discredit Him in the past, the scribes withdrew from the contest (see on Mark 2:19; 7:11–13; Matt. 16:1–4; cf. DA 427). This gave the father of the poor, demon-possessed boy opportunity to present his request personally.

Brought unto thee. Luke (ch. 9:38) says that the father requested Jesus to “look upon” his son. In the Greek, this was a common idiom for a medical examination.

A dumb spirit. For a discussion of demon possession see Additional Note on Chapter 1.

18. Pineth away. Gr. *xērainō*, “to dry up,” or “to wither.” In James 1:11 *xērainō* is used of the withering of grass. Perhaps the father is here describing the progressive worsening of the boy’s physical condition, or he may be describing a stage of seizure in which the boy’s body stiffened.

They could not. Textual evidence may also be cited (cf. p. 146) for adding the words “cast him out.” Compare the disciples’ experience with that of Gehazi (see 2 Kings 4:31).

19. Faithless. That is, “without faith,” or “unbelieving.” Compare God’s appraisal of Israel during the days of Moses (see Num. 14:27; Heb. 3:17–19). It does not seem likely that Jesus had the father of the demon-possessed boy in mind as He spoke these words, for the father’s faith was not the only obstacle in the way of the healing of his son. Because the disciples themselves were primarily at fault (see on Mark 9:29), it would almost seem that the Saviour had them in mind particularly. But He did not desire to single them out for censure in public, and so did not make them the direct object of His remarks. However, if the disciples were “unbelieving,” how much more the crowd.

How long? These words imply that Jesus here speaks as a divine being, one who has temporarily assumed human form.

Suffer you. Literally, “endure you,” or “sustain you.” Moses repeatedly had the same experience with Israel in the wilderness (see Num. 20:10).

20. Wallowed. Or, “rolled around.” The boy was a pitiable sight.

21. Asked his father. A detail recorded only by Mark.

How long? This is the only recorded instance where Jesus made specific inquiry of the case history of one whom He healed. His reasons for doing so upon this occasion are not entirely clear. Possibly He called upon the father to give a description of the disease and its effects in order that those standing by might fully appreciate the boy’s grave condition (see on v. 18). It may have been for this reason that Christ permitted the evil spirit to convulse the boy as it came out (see on v. 26).

22. To destroy him. The case was chronic, and therefore, from a human point of view, more difficult to deal with. In the Greek (see Matt. 17:15) the expression “sore vexed” was generally used to describe diseases which human skill had been unable to alleviate.

If thou canst. See on ch. 1:40.

Help us. The father makes the boy’s case his own (cf. Matt. 15:22, 25).

24. Mine unbelief. The father would not have brought his son if he had not already possessed a measure of faith (cf. on John 4:43–54).

25. People. Literally, “crowd.” This incident probably occurred during the period of retirement from public ministry, during which Jesus sought to escape publicity and to avoid arousing enthusiasm which He did not purpose to satisfy (see on Matt. 15:21). Jesus therefore proceeded to effect the cure without further delay.

Rebuked the foul spirit. The demon had caused the boy’s physical condition. The result would disappear along with the cause (see Luke 9:42).

26. Rent him sore. That is, “greatly convulsed him,” or “convulsed him intensely.” Jesus may have permitted this final manifestation of the demon’s power in order that the contrast between the pitiful condition of the boy and his condition when relieved of the demon might be the more apparent.

As one dead. The boy was utterly exhausted by the violence of the spasm that had seized him.

27. Jesus took him. The demon had departed, and now the touch of Jesus restored the boy’s strength (see on ch. 5:27).

28. The house. The definite article, “the,” implies that this was a particular house that Christ considered His home, possibly Peter’s home in Capernaum (see on chs. 1:29; 2:1), a temporary home for Jesus during the remainder of His stay in Galilee (cf. DA 432).

Why could not we? The Twelve had cast out demons during the course of their Third Galilean Tour (see ch. 6:13). They were at a loss to account for the fact that the power that Jesus had imparted should have departed from them.

29. This kind. The scribes had attributed the helplessness of the nine disciples to the presumed superior power of the demon, asserting that Jesus’ control was limited to the less powerful demons (cf. DA 427). The real trouble, however, lay not in the power of the demon, but in the spiritual impotence of the disciples.

But by prayer. Christ does not here refer to prayer offered in connection with the casting out of demons. He is not concerned with momentary prayer, but with a life actuated by prayer. During the absence of Peter, James, and John with Christ, the nine disciples had been dwelling on their discouragements and personal grievances, in a spirit of jealousy because of the favor shown their absent companions (see DA 431). Their state of mind and heart made it impossible for God to work through them.

Fasting. Textual evidence favors the omission (cf. p. 146) of this word. See on Matt. 6:16; Mark 2:18.

30. They departed thence. [*A secret Journey Through Galilee, Mark 9:30–32=Matt. 17:22, 23=Luke 9:43b–45.* Major comment: Mark. See Retirement from Public Ministry.] That is, from the foot of the mount of transfiguration, where Jesus had healed the afflicted boy (see on v. 14).

Passed through Galilee. Perhaps by a circuitous route ending at Capernaum (see on Matt. 17:24). This secret journey through Galilee probably occupied several days during the latter part of the summer of A.D. 30, about seven or eight months prior to the crucifixion.

Would not. If Jesus were to remain long in one locality, the word would soon spread around and throngs of people would gather, and their coming would interrupt the important instruction He sought to impart to His disciples. Hence it seems that Jesus went from place to place in Galilee, probably avoiding the cities and villages that, a few months before this, had witnessed His mighty works. By-passing the cities and towns would be one effective way to prevent people from learning of His whereabouts. Even

the disciples failed to profit fully by the words of instruction He had to give, and if the inner circle of believers was lacking in spiritual perception, the common people would not profit by what Christ had to say at this time.

31. He taught. Literally, “He was teaching,” that is, He kept on teaching. This is the second of at least three specific occasions on which Jesus told the disciples plainly of His coming sufferings and death (cf. on Matt. 16:21; 20:17–19). There were no doubt other times when Jesus gave them similar instruction, as implied by Matt. 16:21. The desire to be alone with His disciples in order that He might impart this information to them apparently accounts for the secrecy with which Jesus now went about Galilee (see on Mark 9:30; cf. DA 432).

Son of man. See on Matt. 1:1; Mark 2:10.

The third day. See on pp. 248-250.

32. They understood not. In spite of all that Jesus had told them, in plain language (see on v. 31), in plain language (see on v. 31), the disciples still misunderstood (see on Luke 9:45). The principal reason the disciples failed to understand was that they did not want to believe it necessary for the Messiah to suffer and die (see on Matt. 16:22, 23). Such an idea posed a bold challenge to their preconceived opinions about the Messiah (see on Luke 4:19). They expected that eventually Christ would reign as a temporal prince and were unwilling to surrender their glowing expectations of the honor they anticipated sharing with Him when that time should arrive (cf. DA 415, 417; see on Luke 4:19).

Afraid to ask. Realizing, perhaps, that they shared the point of view recently put forward by Peter, and that should they speak now it would be only to express the same thoughts (see on Matt. 16:22, 23), they remained silent. According to Matt. 17:23, they were “exceeding sorry,” that is, “greatly distressed.”

33. Came to Capernaum. [*Humility, Reconciliation, and Forgiveness, Mark 9:33–50=Matt. 18:1–35=Luke 9:46–50.* Major comment: Matthew and Mark. See Retirement from Public Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord.] For the circumstances under which this return to Capernaum occurred, and a comparison between Mark’s account of the discourse and that of Matthew, see on Matt. 18:1.

34. They held their peace. Literally, “they remained silent,” or “they kept on being silent.” They persistently declined to reply to Jesus’ question (v. 33).

Disputed. Gr. *dialegomai*, “to argue,” or “to dispute.”

35. Desire to be first. Here Jesus comes to the heart of the problem—each of the Twelve desired to be “first” in the kingdom they all soon expected the Lord to establish (see on Matt. 18:1). They forgot that true greatness involves the renunciation of greatness as an objective in life. The moment a man sets out to be great he gives evidence of littleness of soul. Compare Matt. 23:8–12; Mark 10:43, 44; Luke 22:24–26.

Servant. Gr. *diakonos*, from which comes the English word “deacon” (see Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8, 12). A *diakonos* is one who ministers to the needs or wants of another and might be either a “slave” or a freeman, though the word implies service rendered voluntarily. Another Greek word commonly translated “servant,” *doulos*, means a “slave” in the usual sense of the word. In the NT *diakonos* is commonly used of a “minister” of the gospel (see 1 Cor. 3:5; Eph. 3:7; 1 Thess. 3:2). The kingdom of heaven is essentially a

matter of rendering service to God and to one's fellow men, not of receiving it from them. True love is essentially a matter of giving love rather than of demanding it (see on Matt. 5:43). He is greatest who loves God and his fellow men most and serves them best.

37. *Receiveth not me.* See on John 12:44, 45.

38. *John answered him.* Not in the sense of answering a specific question by Jesus but in the sense of commenting on Jesus' preceding remarks. These remarks had aroused in John a suspicion that the rebuke he and his brother James had administered upon a previous occasion to one working in Jesus' "name" was not proper (cf. DA 437).

We saw one. The fact that the incident here referred to involved only John and James suggests the possibility that it may have occurred during the course of the Third Galilean Tour, when the two brothers had gone forth together (see on Matt. 10:5; Mark 3:14).

He followeth not us. He was not one of the regular, acknowledged disciples of Jesus.

We forbad him. Or, "we hindered him." For a similar attitude of intolerance on the part of James and John upon another occasion shortly after this, see on Luke 9:54. Upon the present occasion James and John had excused their conduct on the basis that they were jealous for the honor of their Master; in reality, jealousy for their own honor had prompted the action (see DA 437). They rebuked the man for doing what they thought they had the exclusive right to do (see on Matt. 10:8). But even though James and John were disciples, and had the "keys" of the kingdom in their hands (see on Matt. 16:19; 18:18), they had no right to lord it over others. Their commission was positive rather than negative; they were to be zealous in carrying out the orders given them, but had no right to dictate to others. It is the evil one who leads religious leaders to think it their duty to coerce other men into the pattern of conduct and belief they conceive to be right.

39. *Forbid him not.* That is, stop hindering him. We have no right to force other men to conform to our ideas and opinions, or to follow our methods of labor (see DA 438; cf. Num. 11:27–29).

Miracle. Gr. *dunamis* (see p. 208).

In my name. Peter (see Acts 3:6–8) and Paul (see Acts 16:16–18) and probably all the other disciples, when they performed miracles, did so in the "name" of Jesus.

Lightly. Gr. *tachu*, "soon," "speedily," "right away," or "without delay." To perform a miracle in the name of Jesus would be to recognize His power and authority. One who did a miracle in Christ's name would not immediately contradict the very power on which he depended for the performance of the miracle.

40. *Not against us.* Compare the reverse statement of the same truth in Matthew (see on ch. 12:30). The two are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary. Obviously a man cannot be both for and against Jesus at the same time. If the man James and John rebuked was found doing the same work Jesus did, and doing it in the name of Jesus, it must be that God was working with and through him.

On our part. That is, for us, or on our side.

41. *A cup.* See on Matt. 10:42.

Because ye belong. See on Matt. 5:11; 10:18, 42. The character of the deed is determined by the motive that prompts it.

Verily. Gr. *amēn* (see on Matt. 5:18).

Not lose his reward. See on Matt. 5:12; 19:29.

42. *Whosoever shall offend.* See on Matt. 18:6.

43. If thy hand offend. See on Matt. 5:29, 30; 18:8.

Never shall be quenched. See on Isa. 66:24; Matt. 3:12. “The fire that never shall be quenched” is equivalent to “everlasting fire” in the parallel passage in Matthew (see ch. 18:8; see on ch. 5:22).

44. Where their worm. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of vs. 44, 46, as having been inserted here from v. 48. See on v. 48.

45. If thy foot offend. See on Matt. 5:29, 30; 18:8.

46. Where their worm. See on vs. 44, 48.

47. If thine eye offend. See on Matt. 5:29, 30; 18:8, 9.

Kingdom of God. See on Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:3; Luke 4:19.

48. Worm. Gr. *skōlēx*, “a maggot,” or “a worm.” As Major, Manson, and Wright (*The Mission and Message of Jesus*, p. 123) comment, “The undying worm is not the symbol of a soul which cannot die, but is the symbol of corruption which cannot be purged.” In v. 43 “life” is set forth in contrast with “the fire that never shall be quenched.” In Rom. 6:23 and many other scriptures “life” stands in contrast with “death.” In John 3:16 the contrast is between “everlasting life” and “perishing.” It is obvious that Jesus here intends the same contrast. “The fire is not quenched” stands in apposition to “their worm dieth not,” and is an equivalent expression, yet it seems incongruous that maggots should pursue their work in the presence of fire. There is nothing in the word *skōlēx*, “worm,” that even remotely justifies the popular explanation equating “worm” with “soul” (see on Isa. 66:24), a fact recognized by almost all commentators, whatever they may think personally about the state of man in death.

49. Salted with fire. Concerning salt as a preserving agent see on Matt. 5:13. Fire may be considered as a purifying agent, or as a symbol of the final judgment (see on Matt. 3:10). The meaning of this cryptic statement is not entirely clear, and depends entirely upon the immediate context for a satisfactory explanation. To be “salted with fire” probably means that “every one” will pass through the fires of affliction and purification in this present life (see on Job 23:10) or through the fires of the last day. Fire either removes the dross from this present life or destroys the life itself on the last great day. Salt preserves what is good (see on Mark 9:50).

Every sacrifice. In the ancient sanctuary service salt was added to every sacrifice (see on Lev. 2:13). Its presence signified that only the righteousness of Christ could make the offering acceptable to God (cf. DA 439).

50. Salt is good. See on Matt. 5:13.

Have salt in yourselves. If the disciples had the “salt of the covenant” (Lev. 2:13) it would restrain the unfortunate tendencies that had led to the discussion of who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Have peace. A fitting climax to the discourse, an admonition to refrain from further argument on the subject, a warning against jealousy and the spirit of rivalry.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–9EW 162–164

2–8DA 419–425

3 AA 33; DA 739

5 DA 422

7 SR 207

9–29DA 426–431
14–16DA 427
17–27DA 428; GC 515
22, 23 DA 429
23 CW 108; FE 341; MH 65; ML 9; PK 157; 2T 140
24 TM 518
29 IT 344
30, 31 DA 432
30–50DA 432–442
33 DA 434
34, 35 SL 55; 4T 226
35 DA 435
36–40SL 56
37 ML 202
37–39DA 437
38 CSW 85
39 AA 543
40 CSW 85
42 5T 244, 483
42–45DA 438
43–45AA 312
49, 50 DA 439

CHAPTER 10

2 *Christ disputeth with the Pharisees touching divorcement: 13 blesseth the children that are brought unto him: 17 resolveth a rich man how he may inherit life everlasting: 23 telleth his disciples of the danger of riches: 28 promiseth rewards to them that forsake any thing for the gospel: 32 foretelleth his death and resurrection: 35 biddeth the two ambitious suitors to think rather of suffering with him: 46 and restoreth to Bartimæus Bartimaus his sight.*

1. From thence. [*Opening of the Samaritan-Peraean Ministry, Mark 10:1=Matt. 19:1, 2=Luke 9:51–56. Major comment: Matthew and Luke.*] That is, from Capernaum (see ch. 9:33).

Farther side. That is, Peraea (see on Matt. 19:1).

As he was wont. That is, as He had been accustomed to do during the course of His Galilean ministry.

2. Pharisees came. [*Marriage and Divorce, Mark 10:2–12=Matt. 19:3–12. Major comment: Matthew.*]

12. If a woman. The Mosaic law made no provision for a woman to divorce her husband. Ancient Jewish literature, however, reveals that some Jewish women did this. In Roman society it was common for women to do so.

13. Brought young children. [*Blessing the Children, Mark 10:13–16=Matt. 19:13–15=Luke 18:15–17. Major comment: Matthew.*]

14. Much displeased. Gr. *aganakteō*, “to be very indignant.”

15. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18.

Receive the kingdom. See on Matt. 18:3. Here Jesus presents a child as a model that adults are to follow. The simple trust and loving obedience of a child are representative of

traits of character highly treasured in the kingdom of heaven. Notice that Jesus speaks of “little” children, those who have not learned, from the poor examples set by adults, the sins of doubt and disobedience.

16. In his arms. He brought them into the closest possible relationship to Himself, an unspoken rebuke to the disciples for attempting to separate them from Him. This affectionate gesture testifies better than anything else to the warm personal interest Jesus felt for them (see Matt. 18:2; Luke 9:47).

17. There came one. [*The Rich Young Ruler, Mark 10:17–31=Matt. 19:16–30=Luke 18:18–30.* Major comment: Matthew.]

19. Defraud not. Only Mark mentions this.

21. Take up the cross. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) omitting this clause.

23. Looked round about. A graphic picture portrayed by Mark. It seems almost possible to see Jesus looking from one to another of His disciples to observe how they reacted to the decision of the rich young ruler.

26. Saying among themselves. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between this and the reading “saying to Him.”

29. Wife. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the omission of this word.

32. Going up to Jerusalem. [*Jesus Foretells His Death, Mark 10:32–34=Matt. 20:17–19=Luke 18:31–34.* Major comment: Matthew.]

Went before them. The solemnity of this final approach to Jerusalem was reflected in the demeanor of Jesus. Apparently He deliberately walked on ahead of them contrary to His custom, obviously desiring to be by Himself.

They were amazed. Jesus’ unprecedented behavior astonished the disciples and filled their hearts with anxiety (cf. DA 547).

Took again the twelve. The Twelve knew full well of the efforts afoot to take their Master’s life (see on Luke 13:31; cf. John 11:7, 8) but failed to realize the fact that, in the end, these efforts would prove successful (see Luke 18:34). Matthew and Mark have little to say about the fact that the Twelve failed to grasp the import of Jesus’ explanation, but record, instead, an incident that shows how little they understood of the matter (Matt. 20:20–28; Mark 10:35–45).

34. The third day. Important textual evidence may also be cited (cf. p. 146) for the reading “after three days” (see pp. 248–250).

35. James and John. [*The Ambition of James and John, Mark 10:35–45=Matt. 20:20–28.* Major comment: Matthew.]

43. Minister. Gr. *diakonos* (see on ch. 9:35).

44. Servant. Gr. *doulos* (see on ch. 9:35).

46. They came to Jericho. [*Blind Bartimaeus, Mark 10:46–52=Matt. 20:29–34=Luke 18:35–43.* Major comment: Mark. See Closing Peraean Ministry; The Ministry of Our Lord; on miracles pp. 208–213.] That is, they had reached Jericho, one of the last stopping places on their way from Peraea to Jerusalem to attend the Passover (see on Matt. 20:17; 21:1). Concerning incidents along the way immediately preceding the arrival in Jericho see on Matt. 20:17–28.

One of the important fords across the Jordan River is 5.5 mi. (9 km.) to the east of Jericho. The city itself lies at the western edge of the Jordan valley, hard by the foothills of the mountains that rise to the west (see on Luke 10:30). New Testament Jericho was more than 1 mi. (c. 2 km.) south of the ruins of OT Jericho. Herod the Great had

beautified the city, and maintained a winter palace there. Jericho was known for its nearby hot springs, where Herod the Great went in the hope of finding healing during the course of his fatal illness. Although this is His only recorded visit to Jericho, there is every reason to suppose that Jesus had visited the city on previous trips to Jerusalem to attend the feasts, and had probably passed through it on His way from Perea to raise Lazarus.

Out of Jericho. Matthew (ch. 20:29) and Mark agree that this incident occurred as Jesus and the Twelve were leaving the city, whereas Luke says that they were approaching Jericho (see Luke 18:35). Various suggestions have been advanced in an endeavor to harmonize this seeming discrepancy.

Some have suggested that although the usual meaning of the Greek words translated “was come nigh unto” (Luke 18:35) is “to approach,” or “to come near to,” it is not impossible that Luke simply meant that Jesus was in the vicinity of Jericho at the time of this incident. Others have suggested that Jesus may have met the beggars on the road between New Jericho and Old Jericho, situated about one mi. to the north, on His way to Jerusalem. There are at least two major difficulties with this explanation, however. In the first place, Old Jericho was in ruins at this time, and it would require a stretch of the imagination to think that Luke would call a pile of ancient ruins “Jericho” and ignore the existing city by that name, so close by. In the second place, the road from NT Jericho to Jerusalem did not lead through OT Jericho, but rather to the foothills to the west, where it follows the *Wadi Qelt* up into the mountains (see on Luke 10:30).

Perhaps the following is a more likely explanation. Luke records the story of Zacchaeus immediately after his account of the healing of Bartimaeus (see Luke 18:35 to 19:10). Both Zacchaeus and Bartimaeus apparently lived in Jericho, and Jesus met the one not long after the other. According to the order of the narrative in Luke, Jesus was a guest at the tax collector’s home after the healing of the blind men. Most probably, Zacchaeus’ inability to get a glimpse of Jesus in the streets of the city made it necessary for him to run ahead of the crowd to find a suitable tree to climb, probably on the outskirts of the city (see on Luke 19:4), where he awaited Jesus’ coming. According to Luke 19:1 Jesus had “passed through” Jericho before He met Zacchaeus. Upon meeting Zacchaeus, Jesus turned back with him, to spend the remainder of the day in his home, and it may well have been that the blind men succeeded in getting the attention of Jesus on His way back into the city. In circumstances such as these Luke would be correct in saying that Jesus was entering the city, and Matthew and Mark would be equally correct in saying that He was leaving it.

A great number of people. A few days before the Passover there would be throngs of people on the roads leading to Jerusalem.

Bartimaeus. The name is from the Aramaic *Bar-Ṭim’ai*, which Mark translates for his readers. Matthew speaks of two blind men (see ch. 20:30). Mark’s reason for mentioning only one of them may be that some fact concerning the one appealed to Mark as being of particular interest to his readers (see on ch. 5:2). Possibly Bartimaeus later became one of the more well-known followers of Jesus. See Additional Notes on Matt. 3, Note 2.

Highway. Gr. *hodos*, “way,” “path,” or “road” (see on ch. 11:4). The beggars probably sat just outside the city gate, where passers-by would take pity on them.

47. When he heard. Throngs were now constantly passing along the road to Jerusalem. The beggars no doubt overheard some of the bystanders say that Jesus was in this particular throng.

Son of David. The use of this strictly Messianic title implies some degree of recognition of Jesus as the Promised One (see on Matt. 1:1; 9:27).

Have mercy. Compare Matt. 9:27; 15:22.

48. Charged him. Or, “reproved him.” Probably they were seeking to avert a public incident upon which the Jewish or the Roman authorities might seize as a pretext for arresting Him. See on Matt. 19:1, 3; 20:18.

Hold his peace. Literally, “be silent.”

Cried the more. Bartimaeus realized that this might be his only opportunity to obtain healing at the hands of Jesus. His persistence testified to his earnest faith in the power of Jesus.

49. Be of good comfort. Or, “be of good courage.”

50. Garment. Gr. *himation*, “a mantle,” that is, an outer garment (see on Matt. 5:40).

Rose. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the reading “leaped up.”

51. What wilt thou? It was obvious that the blind man sought to have his sight restored. As usual, however, Jesus desired that the suppliant make a specific request, as a recognition of need and an evidence of faith. It was not alone for Bartimaeus himself, however, that Jesus put this question to him. He desired that those who witnessed the event should better understand the significance of the miracle (see on ch. 5:32, 34).

Received my sight. Literally, “recover my sight.” The Greek makes it clear that Bartimaeus was not born blind, but had become blind after birth.

52. Thy faith. See on Mark 5:34; Luke 7:50.

Followed Jesus. It was only natural that those who had been healed should desire to remain with Jesus. Compare the request of the Gadarene demoniacs (see on ch. 5:18–20). It is not certain whether Jesus was on His way to the home of Zacchaeus (see on ch. 10:46) or to Jerusalem.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 DA 488

13–16AA 273; DA 511–517; MH 41; 3T 422

14 AH 274, 275; CG 253; CT 118; DA 512, 517; Ev 349; FE 161; GW 207; MH 42

15, 16 4T 141; 5T 421

16 GW 188; MH 41; MM 19

17, 18 DA 518

17–22DA 518–523

17–31COL 390–396

20, 21 2T 679

21 DA 519; 4T 505

21, 23 COL 393

23 4T 468

24, 26 DA 555

24–27COL 394

28–30T 495

29, 30 COL 395; 1T 510

30 5T 42

32 DA 547
32–45DA 547–551
36 DA 548
38, 39 SR 407
38–45SL 57
44 EW 102
45 ML 225
51 Ev 553; PK 435

CHAPTER 11

1 *Christ rideth with triumph into Jerusalem: 12 curseth the fruitless leafy tree: 15 purgeth the temple: 20 exhorteth his disciples to stedfastness of faith, and to forgive their enemies: 27 and defendeth the lawfulness of his actions, by the witness of John, who was a man sent of God.*

1. When they came. [*The Triumphal Entry, Mark 11:1–11=Matt. 21:1–11=Luke 19:29–44=John 12:12–19.* Major comment: Matthew.]

2. Never man sat. Newness was considered an essential quality of things assigned to either sacred or royal use (see Ex. 13:2; 23:19; Lev. 21:13, 14; Num. 19:2; 1 Sam. 6:7).

4. By the door without. Many Oriental dwellings were constructed in the shape of a square, with an open courtyard in the center. From this courtyard a passageway led out to the street. Ordinarily, the ass and the colt would have been tethered in the courtyard rather than at the gate in the open street.

A place where two ways met. Gr. *amphodon*, “a road round anything,” “a block of houses,” or “a quarter [of a town].” However, the meaning of the word here is obscure. *Amphodon* is from two Greek words, *amphi*, “on both sides,” and *hodos*, “a way,” or “a road.” Some have suggested that *amphodon* may here refer to a side road, or perhaps to a circuitous road. See Closing Ministry at Jerusalem.

11. Into the temple. This was the very center of Jewish national and religious life, the logical place for Messiah-King to be crowned; the place where His authority should first be recognized and from which the official call should go out to men to accept His sovereignty (see Vol. IV, p. 27-30). The priests and elders of Israel should have been the ones to acknowledge His authority. However, “he came unto his own, and his own received him not” (see on John 1:11).

Looked round about. The temple being His house, Jesus walked about its courts surveying that which was rightfully His, but which those entrusted with its care had appropriated to their own selfish purposes (see Matt. 21:33–39).

Went out unto Bethany. When the concourse of people finally reached Jerusalem they were too late, and vainly sought for Jesus that they might crown Him king (see DA 581). But, as upon previous occasions when His mission was faced with a crisis, Jesus spent the entire night in prayer (see on Mark 3:13; cf. DA 581).

12. On the morrow. [*The Fruitless Fig Tree, Mark 11:12–14, 20–26=Matt. 21:18–22.* Major comment: Mark. See Closing Ministry at Jerusalem; Passion Week; on miracles pp. 208–213.] This was “the morrow” after the Triumphal Entry (see vs. 1–11), and thus a Monday morning. Following a strictly chronological pattern, Mark records the cleansing of the Temple (vs. 15–19) between the cursing of the fig tree (vs. 12–14) and the discovery that it had withered (vs. 20–26). Matthew, who often follows a topical

rather than a chronological order (see p. 274), narrates, as a unit, the entire experience with the fruitless fig tree, without mention of the fact that some 24 hours elapsed between the curse placed upon it and the discovery that the tree had withered.

From Bethany. Where He had spent the night (see on v. 11).

He was hungry. Perhaps circumstances since the Triumphal Entry (see on v. 11) had made it inconvenient for Jesus to partake of food, at least of a full and nourishing meal. The fact that no mention is made of hunger on the part of the disciples seems to imply that they had recently eaten.

13. Seeing a fig tree. As upon the occasion of the Triumphal Entry the day before, Jesus probably followed a more or less direct route from Bethany into Jerusalem, up the gentle, eastern slope of the Mount of Olives and down the comparatively steep western slope and across the Kidron Valley into Jerusalem (see on Matt. 21:1; Luke 19:41). The fig tree attracted attention by being the only one of the trees in the orchard fully leafed out (cf. DA 581).

Afar off. Jesus saw the tree some time before reaching it. Apparently this particular tree grew near to the road (see Matt. 21:19).

Having leaves. A fully leafed fig tree gave promise of well-developed, though not necessarily ripe, fruit. On the other hand, leafless trees, as the rest of the trees in the orchard were, raised no false hopes that fruit would be found on them, and therefore occasioned no disappointment.

In this acted parable (see on v. 14) the fully leafed fig tree represented the Jewish nation, and the other trees, the Gentile nations. True, the Gentiles bore no fruit, but then, none was expected of them because they made no profession of bearing fruit (see Vol. IV, pp. 26, 27). This precocious fig tree, however, had leaves that betokened figs.

Nothing but leaves. Here was promise without performance. Of all vices there was none Jesus found more offensive than that of hypocrisy (see on Matt. 6:2; 23:13). Like the fruitless fig tree, Jewish religion was destitute of fruit. It was replete with form and ceremony but lacked true godliness (see on Mark 7:2, 3; see Vol. IV, pp. 30-33).

The time of figs. In Palestine the early crop of figs usually matures in June, and the late crop in September. It was now near Passover, probably in April, and thus only a few weeks before the early crop would mature. Although it was unusual to expect to find figs this early in the season, nevertheless, a tree in full leaf might, conceivably, have fruit approaching maturity. It should also be noted that in Oriental lands green or unripe fruit is often relished (see on Isa. 28:4).

14. Answered. The tree had not spoken; Jesus was simply “answering” the fully leafed but fruitless condition of the fig tree.

No man ... hereafter. Literally, “no one ... never.” The Greek double negative makes the prohibition most emphatic. The barrenness of the tree represented the unproductiveness of Israel, and the curse, the judgment Jesus was to pronounce the following day—“your house is left unto you desolate” (see on Matt. 23:38). It was also on the day following that Jesus sternly censured the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocritical pretensions (see Matt. 23:13-33).

The purpose of this acted parable was to prepare the minds of the disciples for the scenes of the next few days, during which the Jewish leaders would confirm their rejection of Jesus. Acted parables often lead men to think more effectively than mere words could possibly do. For other acted parables see Isa. 20:2-6; Eze. 4:1 to 5:17.

15. They come to Jerusalem. [*Second Cleansing of the Temple, Mark 11:15–19=Matt. 21:12–17=Luke 19:45–48. Major cement: Matthew.*]

16. Through the temple. That is, through the courts of the Temple. The word here used for Temple is *hieron*, which refers to all courts and buildings within the Temple area, not the *naos*, or Temple proper. Upon entering the sacred precincts of the Temple men were to lay aside, as a token of reverence, any burden they might be bearing. Apparently, men carrying burdens were using the Temple courts as a short cut to avoid a more circuitous journey (see Mishnah *Berakoth* 9. 5, Soncino ed. of the Talmud, p. 328).

17. Called of all nations. Jesus was standing, apparently, in the particular part of the Temple assigned to the Gentile believers in the true God. This, the officers of the Temple had converted into a sort of Temple market place.

Thieves. Rather, “robbers,” that is, organized plunderers, not petty pilferers.

18. They feared him. Especially because of His great influence over the people, which had been so impressively demonstrated at the Triumphal Entry the day before.

Doctrine. Literally, “teaching” (see on Matt. 7:28).

20. In the morning. That is, the morning of Tuesday, the day following the cleansing of the Temple. Since Monday morning the disciples had had further opportunity to witness the stubborn animosity of the Jewish rulers toward Jesus. They were to see much more before this day was over. For Jesus and the Twelve, the first incident of this fateful day was the sight of the withered fig tree.

From the roots. A detail noted only by Mark. This is Jesus’ only miracle that can be said to have brought injury. Critics have suggested that Jesus pronounced the curse on the fruitless fig tree in anger. However, in the entire life of Jesus there is nothing to suggest that He ever wantonly brought injury or suffering to men, animals, or other creatures of His hand, or that He acted from unworthy motives. The circumstances under which Jesus performed this miracle provide a fully satisfactory explanation of His purpose in performing this unique act. This very day the leaders of the nation were to confirm their decision to reject Jesus as the Messiah, and He was to announce their rejection by Heaven (see on Matt. 23:38). Of all of this the disciples had no true understanding, and it was undoubtedly for the purpose of preparing them for this tragic event that Jesus cursed the fig tree.

21. Peter. Only Mark identifies Peter as the spokesman (see on Matt. 14:28).

Withered away. The withering process occurred during the preceding 24 hours, and was so complete as to be noticeable from the roots up (see v. 20).

22. Have faith in God. As might be expected, the disciples’ reaction was essentially one of surprise at the miraculous nature of this acted parable. Apparently they did not as yet perceive its import. Thus, while their attention was focused on the miracle itself rather than upon its meaning, Jesus took advantage of their interest to point out the heights to which true faith may soar (vs. 22–24), and added an admonition with respect to an important prerequisite to answered prayer (Mark 11:25; see on Matt. 17:20).

23. Verily. See on Matt. 5:18.

This mountain. Jesus and the disciples were at this very moment on the slope of the Mount of Olives. Except for the valley of the Kidron, the Mount of Olives occupied most of the space between Jerusalem and Bethany (see on Matt. 21:1; see Closing Ministry at Jerusalem; Jerusalem in Time of Christ).

Be thou removed. See on Matt. 17:20. Jesus Himself never moved literal mountains, nor did He intend His followers to contemplate any necessity of doing so themselves. Jesus here is speaking of figurative mountains of difficulty.

Doubt. Gr. *diakarinō*, “to separate [one from another],” “to discriminate,” or “to distinguish.” *Diakrinō* is translated “waver” in James 1:6 (see on James 1:6–8).

24. Believe. See on Matt. 7:7.

25. Stand praying. For standing as a posture in prayer see on Luke 18:11. Reference is probably to standing in the Temple courts at the hour of prayer morning or evening.

Forgive. For comment see on Matt. 6:14, 15.

26. If ye do not. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) omitting v. 26, though most manuscripts have the same thought in Matt. 18:35. Our unwillingness to forgive prevents God from hearing and answering our prayers.

27. They come again. [*The Leaders Challenge Jesus’ Authority, Mark 11:27–33=Matt. 21:23–27=Luke 20:1–8.* Major comment: Matthew.]

29. Answer me. Only Mark records the demand for an answer in these forthright words. For comment on Jesus’ question see on Matt. 21:24.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–10DA 569–579

9 6T 203

11–14, 20, 21DA 580–588

13 DA 581, 583; ML 93; 4T 155; 5T 250, 403

13, 14 5T 257

15–19DA 589–593

21 DA 582

22 PK 164; 6T 465; 7T 211; 8T 175, 177; 9T 213

24 COL 148; Ed 258; EW 72; ML 16; SC 51, 96; 2T 140; 8T 23

24–26TM 487

27–33DA 593, 594

CHAPTER 12

1 *In a parable of the vineyard let out to unthankful husbandmen, Christ foretelleth the reprobation of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles. 13 He avoideth the snare of the Pharisees and Herodians about paying tribute to Cæsar: 18 convinceth the error of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection: 28 resolveth the scribe, who questioned of the first commandment: 35 refuteth the opinion that the scribes held of Christ: 38 bidding the people to beware of their ambition and hypocrisy: 41 and commendeth the poor widow for her two mites, above all.*

1. He began to speak. [*The Wicked Husbandmen, Mark 12:1–12=Matt. 21:33–46=Luke 20:9–19.* Major comment: Matthew.] Mark omits the parables of the Two Sons and of the Man Without a Wedding Garment, both found in this context in Matthew and in Luke. Apparently Mark selected the one that impressed him most as being representative of the truths Christ sought to illustrate in these final parables.

Winefat. Gr. *hupolēnion*, “winepit,” the trough or receptacle for grape juice running from the wine press directly above it (see on Matt. 21:33).

2. Of the fruit. Literally, “from the fruit,” that is, some of the fruit, meaning his portion of it (see on Matt. 21:34).

3. They caught him. For the variations in the gospel accounts of this parable, relating to the servants sent and the treatment accorded them, see on Matt. 21:35.

4. At him they cast stones. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) omitting these words, and also the words “sent him away.”

6. His wellbeloved. Perhaps Jesus was thinking of the words of the Father at His baptism (see Matt. 3:17).

12. They left him. That is, after He had told the parable of the Man Without a Wedding Garment (see Matt. 22:15).

13. They send unto him. [*Paying Tribute to Caesar, Mark 12:13–17=Matt. 22:15–22=Luke 20:20–26. Major comment: Matthew.*]

Catch. Gr. *agreuō*, “to catch,” that is, “to take in the hunt,” from *agra*, “a catch,” whether of game or fish.

18. The Sadducees. [*Marriage and the Resurrection, Mark 12:18–27=Matt. 22:23–33=Luke 20:27–38. Major comment: Matthew.*]

23. When they shall rise. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 146) between retaining and omitting these words.

24. Do ye not? The form of the question in Greek implies that Jesus expected an affirmative answer.

26. As touching the dead. That is, as concerning their resurrection from the dead.

In the bush. See Ex. 3:2, 6.

27. Do greatly err. This emphatic pronouncement appears in this strong form only in Mark.

28. One of the scribes. [*The Great Commandment, Mark 12:28–34=Matt. 22:34–40=Luke 20:39, 40. Major comment: Mark.*]

Perceiving. The scribe chosen to carry out this final plot of the Pharisees to entrap Jesus (see on Matt. 22:34, 35) was apparently honest at heart. He was fair-minded enough to recognize that Jesus had “answered them well.”

29. God is one Lord. See on Deut. 6:4. The Scripture passage here quoted has been the sacred watchword of Israel down through their long history. It reflects the distinctive belief of the Jews in the one true God, in contrast with the many gods of the nations. These words were uttered to open the morning and evening prayer services in the Temple, and are a regular part of Jewish synagogue services to this day.

32. Well, Master. That is, “You have spoken well, Teacher,” or “You are right, Teacher” (RSV).

Said the truth. The scribe recognized that Jesus’ answers to previous questions had been accurate and fitting (see on v. 28), and now honestly commends Him in regard to this answer.

33. Burnt offerings. Compare 1 Sam. 15:22. This voluntary admission on the part of the scribe makes evident his insight into the relative importance and the significance of the Temple ritual.

34. Discreetly. Gr. *nounechōs*, “with understanding,” that is, “sensibly.”

From the kingdom. The scribe discerned truth (see v. 33) and honestly acknowledged it to be truth (see v. 32). He was on the threshold of the kingdom. Compare Jesus’ reaction to the rich young ruler (see Mark 10:20, 21; see on Matt. 19:20, 21).

35. While he taught. [*Jesus Silences His Critics, Mark 12:35–37=Matt. 22:41–46=Luke 20:41–44. Major comment: Matthew.*] Only Mark notes that Jesus was still teaching in the Temple.

How say the scribes? Another detail only in Mark. Jesus notes that the scribes acclaim the Messiah as the Son of David, as preliminary to once again calling attention to Himself as the true Messiah.

37. The common people. That is, the great mass of the people, or the crowd at large. This is another detail noted only by Mark.

38. He said unto them. [*Woes Upon Scribe and Pharisee, Mark 12:38–40=Matt. 23:1–39=Luke 20:45–47. Major comment: Matthew.*]

In his doctrine. Literally, “in His teaching” (see on Matt. 7:28).

Beware of the scribes. Mark gives only a brief excerpt from what was a rather lengthy discourse on the hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees (see Matt. 23). As with the Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. 5 to 7) and the Sermon by the Sea (see Matt. 13), Matthew reports the discourses of Jesus at greater length than do the other gospel writers.

Long clothing. These long robes reached to the feet, and were part of the dress commonly worn by the doctors of the law as a badge of their profession.

Love salutations. See on Matt. 23:7.

Marketplaces. See on Matt. 11:16.

39. Chief seats. See on Matt. 23:6.

40. Devour widows’ houses. See on Matt. 23:14.

41. Jesus sat. [*The Widow’s Mites, Mark 12:41–44=Luke 21:1–4. Comment: Mark.*] This incident occurred late in the day, probably Tuesday (see on Matt. 23:1, 38, 39; see Passion Week). Jesus had just emerged victorious from a long and bitter conflict with the leaders of the nation, and was about to depart from the sacred precincts of the Temple forever.

Over against. That is, “opposite,” where He could observe the worshipers making their contributions.

Treasury. Mark does not here refer to the strong room where Temple treasure was stored and guarded, but rather to the contribution chests in the spacious Court of the Women.

Cast in. Rather, “were casting in.” Apparently one rich man after another passed by and deposited his gift.

42. Poor. Gr. *ptōchos*, “[one] in extreme want,” or “lacking in anything.” Luke uses *penichros*, a poetical late form of *penēs*, meaning one who lives a hand-to-mouth existence and who must labor each day in order to have something to eat the next (see Luke 21:2). *Penēs* is from the verb *penomai*, “to work for a living.” Perhaps Jesus intended the spirit of this widow to stand forth in bold contrast with the attitude of the Pharisees toward widows. The poverty of this widow may have been due, in part, to the avarice of some of the scribes and Pharisees present upon this occasion (see on Matt. 23:14). They, said Christ, “devour widows’ houses” (Mark 12:40). But here was a widow who, from a heart overflowing with love for God, “cast in all that she had, even all her living” (v. 44). What a contrast!

Mites. Gr. *lepton*, a coin worth a fraction of one cent U.S. (see p. 49). The *lepton* was the smallest Jewish copper coin in circulation.

Farthing. Gr. *kodrantēs*, which equaled 2 *lepta*, or “mites” (see p. 49), and which amounted to 1/64 of a Roman denarius, a day’s wage in the time of Christ (see on Matt. 20:2). Repeated emphasis has often been laid on the intrinsic smallness of the widow’s gift. Should not more emphasis be placed on the comparative largeness of the gift (see on v. 44)?

43. His disciples. See on Matt. 24:1.

Verily. Or, “truly” (see on Matt. 5:18; John 1:51).

More in, than all. That is, more than all of the rich contributors together. In the sight of Heaven it is not really the size of a gift that counts, but the motive that prompts it. Heaven is interested only in the amount of love and devotion the gift represents, not its monetary value. That is the only basis on which God rewards men, as Jesus so pointedly illustrated by the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard (see on Matt. 20:15). Jesus’ commendation of this widow was based on the spirit that prompted her gift, not on its intrinsic value.

44. Abundance. Gr. *perisseuma*, which besides meaning “abundance” means also “what is left over,” hence, “excess,” or “superfluity.” The rich had a surplus of money; they had more than they needed. They gave from their surplus, and it cost them nothing to give. The value of their gifts in terms of love and devotion was little or nothing because the gifts represented no denial of self.

Want. Gr. *hustere-sis*, “deficiency,” “poverty,” “destitution.”

All that she had. An evidence of the maximum possible love and devotion to God.

Living. Gr. *bios*, “livelihood,” not *zoē*, “life” itself. More than likely the widow did not know where her next meal was coming from.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–12DA 596–600

13–40DA 601–609

16 CE 10; 7T 156

24 COL 110; GC 599; 5T 388

28–33DA 607

30 COL 348; CS 35; CT 32, 360; FE 314, 315, 324; LS 352; ML 117; 2T 45, 70, 168, 504; 3T 39; 4T 119; 5T 536; 6T 477

30, 31 2T 550

33 AH 349; 3T 392

34 DA 608

37 CSW 109; CT 240, 260; Ev 565; FE 242; MH 443; 8T 308

41, 42 DA 614

41–44DA 614–620

42 DA 616; Ed 109; GW 467; 2T 198; 3T 398; 6T 103, 310; 9T 55

42–44AA 342; CS 178, 294; 1T 177; 5T 733; 9T 224; WM 203

43, 44 2T 667

CHAPTER 13

1 *Christ foretelleth the destruction of the temple: 9 the persecutions for the gospel: 10 that the gospel must be preached to all nations: 14 that great calamities shall happen to the Jews: 24 and the manner of his coming to judgment: 32 the hour whereof being known to none, every man is to watch and pray, that we be not found unprovided, when he cometh to each one particularly by death.*

1. As he went out. [*Signs of Christ's Return, Mark 13:1–37=Matt. 24:1–51=Luke 21:5–38.* Major comment: Matthew.]

8. Troubles. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) omitting this word.

9. Take heed. Matthew (ch. 24) omits that part of Jesus' discourse recorded in Mark 13:9–12, probably for the reason that he had already reported practically the same observations and counsels from an earlier discourse. For comment on these verses see on Matt. 10:17–21.

Councils. Undoubtedly a reference to the local Jewish sanhedrins, or courts, which met in the various synagogues (see p. 56).

Rulers and kings. Primarily a reference to Gentile rulers.

Testimony against them. Preferably, "bear witness before them" (see on Matt. 10:18).

10. Published. Gr. *kērussō*, "to proclaim" or "to herald," hence, "to preach."

11. Lead you. Meaning here that they would be "led away to court, to a magistrate, or to punishment" (see Matt. 10:18; Luke 21:12; Luke 22:54; Acts 25:17; etc.).

Take no thought. That is, no anxious thought; "do not be anxious" (see on Matt. 6:25; 10:19).

Neither do ye premeditate. See on Matt. 10:19, 20. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 146) the omission of these words.

14. Standing where it ought not. Or, "set up where it ought not to be" (RSV).

21. Christ. Literally, "the Christ," that is, the Messiah. The word is here used as a title, not as a personal name (see on Matt. 1:1).

24. In those days. Mark is even more definite than Matthew as to the time location of these signs in the heavens (see on Matt. 24:29).

25. Shall fall. See on Matt. 24:29. Vincent (*Word Studies in the New Testament*) calls this "a rendering which falls very far short of the graphic original." He notes that the Greek stresses the sense of continuousness, as of a *shower* of falling stars. See on Rev. 6:13.

34. A far journey. Mark here omits most of that portion of the discourse recorded in Matt. 24:37 to 25:46.

35. Ye know not. See on Matt. 24:36, 44. This is the reason for being watchful, or alert.

At even. The four terms here used refer to the four watches of the night, according to the Roman system then used in Palestine.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 GC 25

1–37DA 627–636

9 AA 81; SR 256; 5T 102, 717

11 CSW 40

13 DA 355

22 GC xi; 5T 746

24 GC 306
 24–26GC 37, 304
 33 DA 634; GC 490; 2T 199, 321; 3T 572; 4T 306; 5T 102, 115; 6T 128; 7T 238
 34 CH 302; ChS 13; COL 326; CS 83, 117, 119; CT 513; DA 362; Ed 138; Ev 91, 95; FE
 48; ML 218, 276; MYP 301; SC 82; TM 165, 183; 2T 250, 255, 667; 4T 397; 5T 182,
 184, 395, 462, 463, 564, 736; 6T 243, 245, 427, 433, 481; 7T 58; 8T 56, 246; 9T 221
 34–378T 37
 35 GC 38; 2T 191
 35, 36 GC 491; 2T 205
 35–372T 190, 192
 36 6T 410
 37 GC 57

CHAPTER 14

1 *A conspiracy against Christ.* 3 *Precious ointment is poured on his head by a woman.* 10 *Judas selleth his Master for money.* 12 *Christ himself foretelleth how he shall be betrayed of one of his disciples:* 22 *after the passover prepared, and eaten, instituteth his supper:* 26 *declareth aforehand the flight of all his disciples, and Peter's denial.* 43 *Judas betrayeth him with a kiss.* 46 *He is apprehended in the garden,* 53 *falsely accused, and impiously condemned of the Jews' council:* 65 *shamefully abused by them:* 66 *and thrice denied of Peter.*

1. After two days. [*The Betrayal Plot*, Mark 14:1, 2, 10, 11=Matt. 26:1–5, 14–16=Luke 22:1–6=John 12:10, 11. Major comment: Matthew.]

3. Being in Bethany. [*Simon's Feast*, Mark 14:3–9=Matt. 26:6–13=Luke 7:36–50=John 12:1–9. Major comment: Matthew and Luke.]

8. Done what she could. That is, she made the best use of what she had at hand. That is what God expects of everyone, no more and no less.

11. They were glad. Possibly the offer made by Judas came just at the time when they were ready to give up of immediately putting into effect their plans (see on Matt. 26:15).

Conveniently. See on Matt. 26:5; cf. Mark 14:2.

12. Killed the passover. [*Preparation for the Passover*, Mark 14:12–16=Matt. 26:17–19=Luke 22:7–13. Major comment: Matthew.]

13. A man. Apparently a servant, not the master of the house (see v. 14). It was unusual for man to carry water in a “pitcher” or earthenware jar; this was usually done by the womenfolk. Men generally transported water in waterskins.

14. Goodman. Gr. *despotēs* (see on Luke 2:29).

Guestchamber. Gr. *kataluma*, a word used in the papyri to describe any lodging place (see on Luke 2:7).

15. A large upper room. Gr. *anagaion*, literally, any room above ground level, hence, a room in the upper part of the house. Compare the Gr. *huperōon*, which strictly means “upper room” (Acts 1:13; etc.). For a suggested identification of this room see on Matt. 26:18.

Furnished. Literally “spread.” Here, the reference is probably to the arrangement of the couches or cushions in the room (see on ch. 2:15).

Prepared. In anticipation, presumably, of the Passover.

17. In the evening. [*The Celebration of the Passover*, Mark 14:17, 18^a=Matt. 26:20=Luke 22:14–16. Major comment: Luke.] That is, the evening of “the first day of unleavened bread” (v. 12). For a discussion of the chronology of the Last Supper see Additional Notes on Matt. 26, Note 2.

18. As they sat. [*The Betrayer Revealed*, Mark 14:18b–21=Matt. 26:21–25=Luke 22:21–23=John 13:21–30. Major comment: Matthew and John.] Rather, “as they reclined” (see on ch. 2:15).

22. As they did eat. [*The Lord’s Supper*, Mark 14:22–25=Matt. 26:26–29=Luke 22:17–20. Major comment: Matthew.]

26. Sung an hymn. [*Retirement to Gethsemane*, Mark 14:26=Matt. 26:30=Luke 22:39. Major comment: Matthew.]

27. Ye shall be offended. [*A Warning to Peter and the Ten*, Mark 14:27–31=Matt. 26:31–35=Luke 22:31–38. Major comment: Matthew.]

Because of me this night. Textual evidence favors the omission (cf. p. 146) of these words here, but they are will attested in Matt. 26:31.

30. This day. According to Jewish reckoning the sixth day of the week had already begun, at sunset, and the trial and crucifixion would take place before the following sunset.

Twice. Only Mark notes this detail.

32. They came. [*Gethsemane*, Mark 14:32–52=Matt. 26:36–56=Luke 22:40–53=John 18:1–12. Major comment: Matthew.]

35. The hour. That is, the events of the hour.

40. Neither wist they. A detail noted only by Mark. For similar situation, in which the disciples were speechless, see ch. 9:6.

41. It is enough. In the papyri the Greek word thus translated appears on receipts indicating payment in full (see on Matt. 6:2). Perhaps Jesus here means that the disciples had slept long enough. Or, He may have meant that the discussion of that particular matter was at an end.

51. A certain young man. This apparently trivial incident does not appear to have any particular connection with the events of the night, yet Inspiration must have had some reason for including it in the narrative. It has been suggested that the author of the Gospel, John Mark (see Acts 12:12), here refers cryptically to his own connection with the arrest of Jesus. This “young man” can hardly have been one of the disciples, for they had all already forsaken Him and fled (Mark 14:50). It should be pointed out, however, that any suggestion regarding the identity of the young man is no more than a conjecture, reasonable though it may appear. Compare John’s studied failure to identify himself by name (John 21:20–24).

The young men. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 146) the simple reading “they.”

52 Naked. Perhaps completely so, or more likely, clad only in his undergarment, or tunic (see on Matt. 5:40; John 21:7).

53. Led Jesus away. [*Night Trial Before the Sanhedrin*, Mark 14:53–72=Matt. 26:57–75=Luke 22:54–65=John 18:25–27. Major comment: Matthew.]

54. Fire. Literally, “light.” It was the light of the fire doubtless that revealed Peter.

61. The Blessed. A designation for the Deity, to avoid use of the sacred name Jehovah, or *Yahweh* (see Vol. I, pp. 171, 172).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 ML 80; 6T 310
 3–11DA 557–568
 6–8DA 560
 6 4T 550
 7 CS 161; MH 201, 205; PK 652; 4T 552
 9 4T 551
 10 DA 564
 17–25DA 652–661
 27, 29 COL 152; DA 688
 29–31 DA 673
 30 DA 712
 32–50DA 685–697
 34–388T 100
 37, 38 DA 689
 38 DA 126; EW 167; GW 163; PP 689; Te 192; 2T 49, 89, 101, 490, 511; 3T 476; 5T 34,
 115, 146; 6T 410
 40 DA 690
 50 DA 697
 53–72DA 698–715
 56 TM 71
 58, 60 DA 706
 70 DA 712
 72 COL 152

CHAPTER 15

1 *Jesus brought bound, and accused before Pilate. 15 Upon the clamour of the common people the murderer Barabbas is loosed, and Jesus delivered up to be crucified. 17 He is crowned with thorns, 19 spit on, and mocked: 21 fainteth in bearing his cross: 27 hangeth between two thieves: 29 suffereth the triumphing reproaches of the Jews: 39 but confessed by the centurion to be the Son of God: 43 and is honourably buried by Joseph.*

1. Straightway. [*Day Trial Before the Sanhedrin*, Mark 15:1=Matt. 27:1=Luke 22:66–71. Major comment: Luke.]

2. Pilate asked him. [*First Trial Before Pilate*, Mark 15:2–5=Matt. 27:2, 11–14=Luke 23:1–5=John 18:28–38. Major comment: Luke and John.]

3. He answered nothing. Textual evidence attests the omission (cf. p. 146) of these words here in Mark.

6. At that feast. [*Second Trial Before Pilate*, Mark 15:6–19=Matt. 27:15–31^a=Luke 23:13–25=John 18:39 to 19:16. Major comment: Matthew and John.]

He released. Or, “he used to release,” that is, it was his customary practice to do so.

15. Willing. Literally, “wishing.” It was more than simple willingness on Pilate’s part; he was anxious to satisfy the people, if possible, lest their uncontrolled passions lead to a riot.

20. Led him out. [*The Crucifixion*, Mark 15:20–41=Matt. 27:31^b–56=Luke 23:26–49=John 19:17–37. Major comment: Matthew and John.]

21. Father of. Only Mark records this.

28. The scripture. A citation from Isa. 53:12. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for omission of this quotation from Isaiah. It is unquestioned, however, in Luke 22:37.

37. Gave up the ghost. Literally, “breathed out,” or “expired” (see on Matt. 27:50).

40. Mary the mother. Nothing further is known of this Mary than the mention made of her by the various gospel writers in connection with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Some have identified her as Mary the wife of Cleophas (see on John 19:25; cf. on Mark 3:18).

Salome. Comparison with Matt. 27:56 implies that Salome was possibly the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee. It has also been suggested that she was a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus (see on John 19:25).

42. Preparation. [*The Burial*, Mark 15:42–47=Matt. 27:57–61=Luke 23:50–56=John 19:38–42. Major comment: Matthew and Mark. See Betrayal, Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus; the Crucifixion In Relation To Passover, Passion Week , pp. 232, 233.] Gr.

paraskeuē, “preparation,” a word that Jewish usage in the NT probably applies either to the day preceding a Sabbath day or to the day preceding a feast day. See p. 107.

Day before the sabbath. This was the weekly Sabbath (see Additional Notes on Matthew 26, Note 1). Mark’s precise statement, taken together with the sequence of days in Luke 23:54 to 24:1, makes it certain beyond the possibility of doubt that Friday was the day of the crucifixion.

45. Body. Gr. *ptōma*, “corpse,” meaning a dead body only. This is the only occurrence of *ptōma* in the NT. The usual Greek word for “body” is *sōma* (see Matt. 27:59; Luke 23:52; John 19:40).

Beheld. The Greek implies that the women observed intently the interment of Jesus, planning to embalm His body after the sacred hours of Sabbath had passed by (see Luke 23:55 to 24:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1–20DA 723–740

2, 4, 5 DA 726

9 DA 733

16–19DA 734

20–38DA 741–757

26 EW 179

31 SR 222

31, 32 DA 749

32 EW 179

34 COL 196; SR 226

44 DA 773

CHAPTER 16

1 *An angel declareth the resurrection of Christ to three women. 9 Christ himself appeareth to Mary Magdalene: 12 to two going into the country: 14 then to the apostles, 15 whom he sendeth forth to preach the gospel: 19 and ascendeth into heaven.*

1. Was past. [*The Resurrection*, Mark 16:1–11=Matt 28:1–15=Luke 24:1–12=John 20:1–18. Major comment: Matthew and John.] Or, “had intervened,” that is, between the events of ch. 15 and those about to be presented in ch. 16. The resurrection is thus clearly

stated to have taken place on the first day of the week, not earlier as some have proposed (see on Matt. 28:1).

Mary Magdalene. See Additional Note on Luke 7.

Had bought. Rather, “bought.” In all probability these spices were purchased after sundown, on what we would call Saturday night, and were in addition to those that the women had prepared Friday (see Luke 23:56) and those that Nicodemus brought (see John 19:39).

2. Very early. See on Matt. 28:1.

Peter. Only Mark here refers to Peter by name (cf. p. 563). Jesus’ mention of him by name was an indication that, in spite of his mistakes, Peter was still acknowledged and included among Jesus’ closest friends, because he had sincerely repented (see Matt. 26:75; Mark 14:72; DA 713).

8. Any thing to any man. That is, they said nothing to those they met on their way into the city. Some have misconstrued this statement to mean that the women said nothing to the disciples, and that hence, Mark here contradicts the other gospel writers. Such a conclusion is wholly unwarranted.

9. When Jesus was risen. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of vs. 9–20 altogether, and thus for concluding the Gospel of Mark with v. 8. Commentators favoring the omission of vs. 9–20 point to numerous differences in literary style, idiom, and wording between these verses and the preceding portion of the Gospel. These verses are called the Longer Ending of Mark. Instead of the Longer Ending a few ancient manuscripts have what is called the Shorter Ending: “But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation” (RSV). Taken as a whole, however, textual evidence favors the so-called Longer Ending. See on v. 14.

11. Believed not. This record of the incredulity of the disciples, even in the face of eyewitness accounts testifying that Jesus was risen, constitutes strong evidence in favor of the accuracy and reliability of the resurrection story, even to its smallest details.

12. After that. [*The Walk to Emmaus*, Mark 16:12=Luke 24:13–32. Major comment: Luke.]

Another form. Possibly a reference to the resurrected body of Jesus in contrast with His pre-resurrection body, or to the fact that Jesus remained unrecognizable to the disciples on the way to Emmaus.

13. Neither believed they them. [*First Appearance in the Upper Room*, Mark 16:13=Luke 24:33–49=John 20:19–23. Major comment: Luke and John.] See on Luke 24:34, 35, 41.

14. Afterward. [*Second Appearance in the Upper Room*, Mark 16:14=John 20:24–29. Major comment: John.] For the chronological sequence of the postresurrection appearances see Additional Note on Matt. 28.

The eleven. A technically correct term for the group of Jesus’ special followers as a whole, since the apostasy and suicide of Judas left but eleven of the original twelve disciples. However, elsewhere they are still called by the familiar term, “the twelve” (see John 20:24).

As they sat at meat. Several of the disciples appear to have made the upper chamber in which they had partaken together of the Last Supper, their temporary home.

Upbraided them. Unbelief, persisted in when the evidence provided is sufficient, is worthy only of condemnation.

Hardness of heart. See on Ex. 4:21.

One ancient manuscript, the Codex Freerianus (see p. 119), also known as the Washingtonensis, adds to v. 14 what is sometimes called the “Freer Logion.” This insertion bears unmistakable marks of being a later interpolation, and is of interest only as a textual curiosity.

15. Go ye. [*Appearance on a Mountain in Galilee*, Mark 16:15–18=Matt. 28:16–20. Major comment: Matthew.] There is nothing in the narrative here to indicate a change in time or place from those indicated in v. 14. However, these verses are probably a brief report of a portion of the extended instructions Jesus gave to some 500 who had gathered on a mountain in Galilee (see on Matt. 28:16, 19; cf. DA 818, 821). “Again and again the words were repeated, that the disciples might grasp their significance” (DA 818), a fact which may account for the various versions of the gospel commission as given by the several gospel writers.

16. Shall be saved. Here are presented two requirements made of those who accept the gospel proclamation—faith in Jesus, and baptism. The first is the inward acceptance of the salvation so graciously provided by the vicarious death of the world’s Redeemer; the second is the outward token of an inward change of life (see on Rom. 6:3-6).

Believeth not. It is worthy of note that if any receive condemnation, it is because of disbelief. Baptism is not here referred to, one way or the other, for the inward reality of salvation far transcends in importance the outward token. Lack of baptism would simply be an outward token of an inward disbelief, which disbelief, of itself, is sufficient to bar a man from the blessings of salvation. Perhaps Jesus here foresaw that—as in the case of the thief on the cross—there would be instances in which truly converted men and women would be unable to receive the rite of baptism.

Damned. Rather, “condemned.”

17. These signs. That is, supernatural and miraculous demonstrations of divine power (see p. 208). However, valuable as miracles are, it is not too hard to counterfeit them or to get reports of presumed miracles into circulation. These reports tend to confuse the unwary and appeal to the credulous. As a matter of fact, miracles do not constitute the strongest evidence of the genuineness of the gospel (see DA 406, 799). It should be remembered that Jesus Himself consistently refused to perform miracles as signs.

Cast out devils. See Additional Note on Mark 1.

New tongues. See Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6; 1 Cor. 12:28; 1 Cor. 14:2–5. During their previous ministry the Twelve had not been given the gift of tongues, for it was not needed. Now that there was a need, the power was bestowed upon them. See on 1 Cor. 14.

18. Serpents. See on Luke 10:19.

Deadly thing. Jesus here uses illustrations of such experiences as would normally result in serious injury or death, and promises the gospel messengers that, on many occasions, they will receive special protection, according to the Father’s will.

Lay hands. See on ch. 1:31.

19. After the Lord. [*The Ascension*, Mark 16:19, 20=Luke 24:50–53. Major comment: Luke.] This transitional clause makes it appear that the ascension followed

immediately the counsel of vs. 15–18. This, however, does not seem to have been the case. It is more probable that a longer interval is here referred to (see on v. 15).

Right hand. The position of honor and authority. Christ's exalted position in heaven is repeatedly the subject of comment by various NT writers (see Acts 7:55; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 1 Peter 3:22; Rev. 3:21; etc.).

20. They went forth. Alone among the gospel writers, Mark, in one bold stroke, takes note of the triumphs of the gospel accomplished by the Holy Spirit through the apostles during the first few years after the ascension.

Preached every where. Such was and is the mission of Christ's followers (see v. 15).

Working with them. In the providence of God, divine power is ever to be united with human effort.

Confirming the word. Partially by the evidence of divine power manifested in the "signs" referred to in vs. 17, 18.

Amen. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 146) for the omission of this word.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 DA 769

1, 2 EW 186

1–8DA 788–794

2, 3 DA 788

7 COL 156; DA 793; Ed 90; 4T 488

9 DA 568

15 AA 174; ChS 9, 23; COL 300, 303, 371; CT 466; DA 369, 818; Ed 264; Ev 301; FE 199, 201; GC 351; GW 115; MH 106; ML 226; MM 327; TM 401; 3T 406, 408; 4T 472; 5T 391, 456; 6T 89, 273, 447, 480; 7T 39; 8T 15, 16, 119, 215; 9T 39, 136, 255; WM 187

17, 18 CH 497; DA 821, 823; EW 29

18 CH 34, 391; CT 466; MH 148, 226; ML 226; 4T 225

19, 20 CH 553; 7T 114

20 AA 599; CH 498; CM 20; DA 827; MH 139; MM 319; 6T 480; 8T 15; 9T 141

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Mk 7:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.